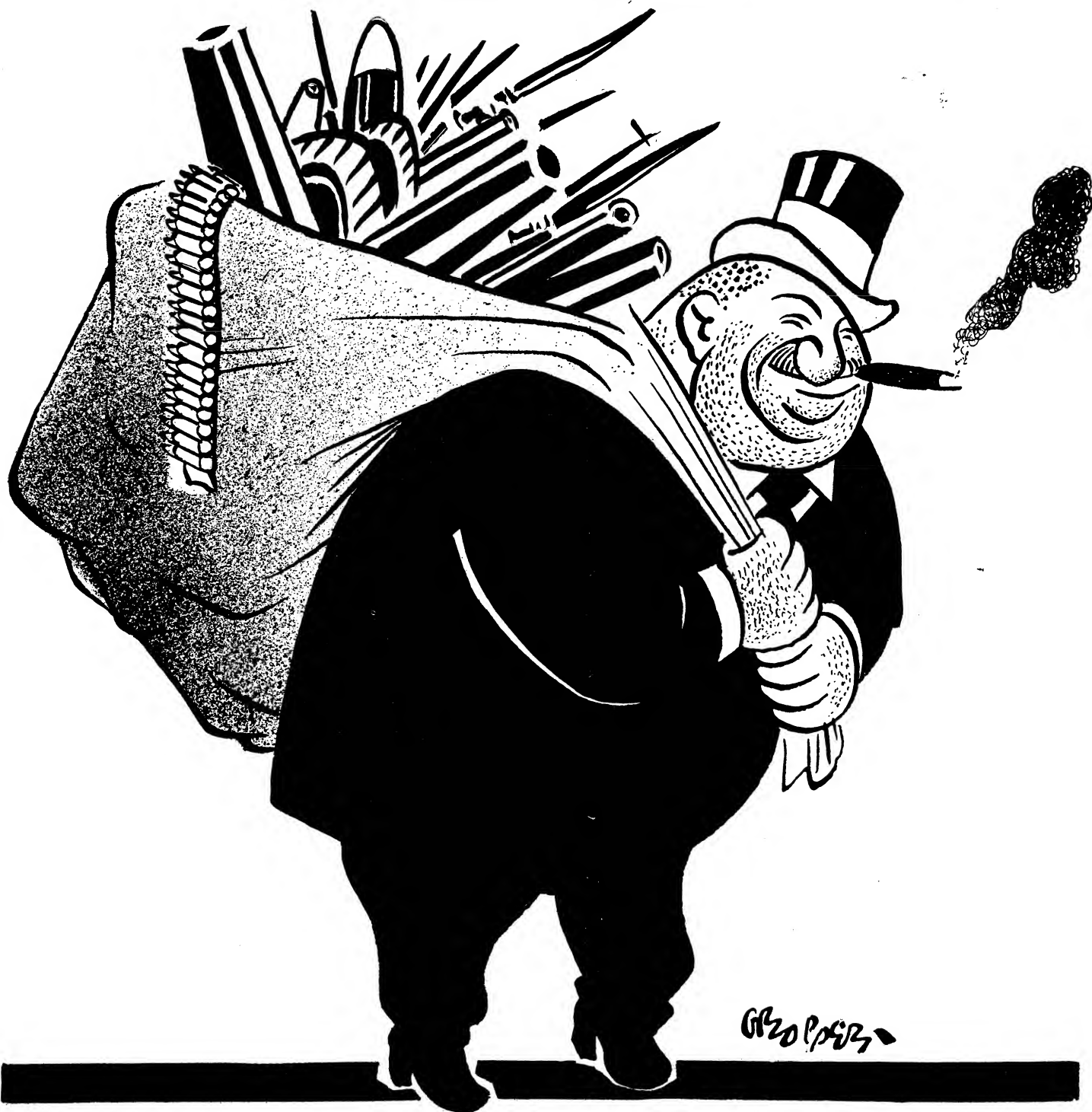


**N
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MASSES

DECEMBER, 1929

15 Cents



A WARTIME XMAS

**In this Issue: John Dos Passos • Josephine Herbst • Carlo Tresca
Upton Sinclair • H. L. Potamkin • Tina Modotti • Art Young**

AMERICAN JUNGLE NOTES • By MICHAEL GOLD

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A WARTIME CHRISTMAS

By CARLO TRESCA

War! Khaki clad "boys" marching. Red Cross officials making collections with self-satisfied efficiency. "Allegiance to the Flag" sworn at every public gathering. Ships loaded with human flesh crossing the dangerous waters of the Atlantic. The German "bloodhounds" described as man-eating brutes. News of torpedoed steamers. News of battles. Our dear "Allies" suddenly become shining paragons of virtue. Our own soldiers, the bravest, the cleanest, the most upright, the most idealistic, the most freedom-loving in the world. The spirit of crusading is abroad. Everything is turned into a crusade: even feeding the soldiers sandwiches in the Y.M.C.A. huts; even knitting gloves and sweaters for our heroes "over there;" even kissing the boys goodbye to make the reminiscence tingle in their blood while it is oozing out into the frozen ground in the vicinity of Ypres. Women suddenly leaping into the glaring light of heroism accompanied by all the trumpets of publicity; women driving ambulances; women offering their "all" for the Cause; women doing astute work for the Liberty Loan; chorus girls in scant clothing mounted on three elephants marching in line through the noisy traffic of New York to advertise the Liberty Loan. All for the Cause; all for Democracy!

And while the great learned president, who had been elected because "he kept us out of war," was uttering his beautifully worded sonorous phrases about democracy, freedom and humanity, the Department of Justice, in cooperation with the War Department, is efficiently and grimly extinguishing every expression of questioning, independent thinking, not to speak of protest. Radical papers are either shut down or made colorless. The censor is raging. "Radicals" are being deported by the scores. The system of espionage has been put on a basis of unusual efficiency. "Sedition," "criminal anarchy," "criminal syndicalism" are so many magic formulæ to place behind iron bars both innocent and guilty. An insistent, albeit silent war is being waged against every dissension, however slight. Hounding one's neighbor had become an act of patriotic rectitude.

II. MERRY CHRISTMAS, DOCTOR!

And just at that moment, my friends, the Italians from Sault St. Marie, Ontario, Canada, asked me to go there to deliver three lectures on the war. My personal status was rather awkward. I was a prisoner in the United States, that is to say I was permitted to live in the country as a resident alien, but as *persona non grata*; were I to go out of the country, the authorities might not allow me to return. It was therefore necessary for me to take precautions in order that I might be enabled to come back. I

travelled under an assumed name. My friends met me in Sault St. Marie, Michigan, on this side of the frontier, and helped me enter the English Dominion under the guise of a sportsman.

On our return to the United States we were met on the platform by an agent of the United States Immigration Bureau who questioned every one as to his habitat, business, and so on. The friends accompanying me stated that they were going back to Canada, and were left unmolested. Upon my declaring that I was going to Detroit for Christmas to visit relatives, I was requested to accompany the immigration officers into one of the rooms in the station building.

I was supposed to be a teacher in Sault St. Marie, in an Italian school. I was supposed to go to Detroit to study during my Christmas vacation the Italian colony there, with the intention of settling down in the United States and opening a school. I was supposed to be a loyal and upright leader of the young generation. I was supposed to be a man who loves the Christmas holiday as a religious festival. The chairman was visibly impressed; his questions became ever friendlier. He kept silent for a while as if meditating, then he bent over to his assistant, whispered something to them; the three seemed to agree; then the chairman stood up and the unexpected happened. The austere immigration official shook hands with me.

"Before we release you," he said, "permit me to ask you the last question. In case you decide to remain in Detroit, do you intend to become an American citizen?"

By that time I was on my feet as well, and with great earnestness I replied, "This is the great ambition of my life." To which he:

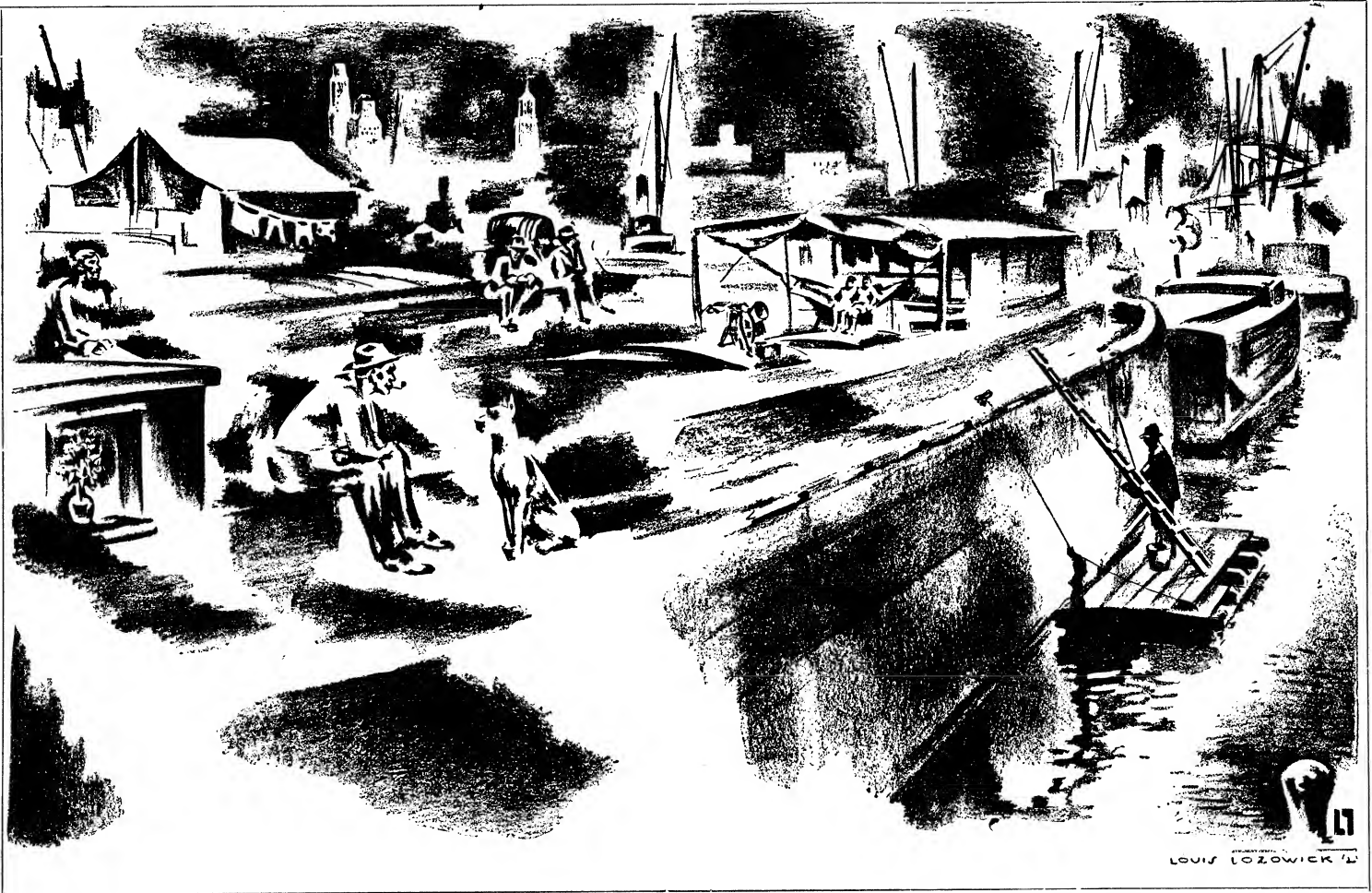
"Well, Doctor, I hope you like Detroit and remain there, because we need citizens like you in this country. Good luck and merry Christmas to you." He gave me a cigar. I shook hands with every one and departed.

In the street I was surrounded by the anxiously waiting Italians who began to shower me with questions. I said:

"I have fifteen minutes before the train leaves. Please, let's go to the station, don't look back here." Those ardent radicals could have spoiled the whole game. Soon I was safely installed in a train going for Detroit, and heaved a sigh of relief.

III. POLICE AND SPAGHETTI

I was tired and nervously exhausted. In the train I fell asleep and when I woke I found myself at the Pittsburgh station. Nothing remained for me but to wait

*Barge Dwellers Sunday**Lithograph by Louis Lozowick.*

for a return train to go back to Beaver Falls. As the train halted at Rochester, Pennsylvania, which is located between Pittsburgh and Beaver Falls, a big, husky fellow, a countryman of mine, stepped into the car. I did not know him, but he recognized me and I learned that he was going to attend the meeting at Beaver Falls. He also imparted to me the cheerful news that I was going to be arrested in Beaver Falls and that his mission was to arrange with the other Italians for bail if necessary.

Now remember that I was coming into Beaver Falls, not from Canton, but from Pittsburgh, that is to say, I was on the other side of the station. As I stepped out of the train I saw on the opposite side, next to the tracks leading from Canton, a crowd of policemen in uniforms, deputy sheriffs and comrades. I realized that I was stepping into a hornet's nest (we Italians say "stepping into a hot bath"). My companion, the big fellow from Rochester, took my suitcase and we dashed down into the street unnoticed. We hailed a taxi and told the chauffeur to drive very slowly around the hall where the meeting was to be held. I did this in order to survey the situation and to find out what could be done both for myself and my comrade involved.

It was dark already, the streets were deserted. A strange silence seemed to be brooding in the air. We drove up in front of the hall waiting in the cab. We saw the silhouettes of people passing. Three silhouettes approached the cab and I recognized one of my followers. We quickly opened the door and my Rochester companion grabbed the fellow and forced him into the cab—all this being done quickly and silently. We held a conference. The man told me that the hall was packed with policemen, that a big crowd of angry Italians was waiting in the hall indignant over the action of the authorities and failing to understand why they should not be allowed to hear their lecturer. In fact, the man had left the hall because he felt that any moment something tragic might happen, since the feeling between the Italians and the police was becoming more and more tense.

It was obvious to me that I could not go to the hall. I quickly made my decision and ordered the cabman to drive us to the

house of De Cicco, a friend who had organized the meeting and was exchanging letters with me.

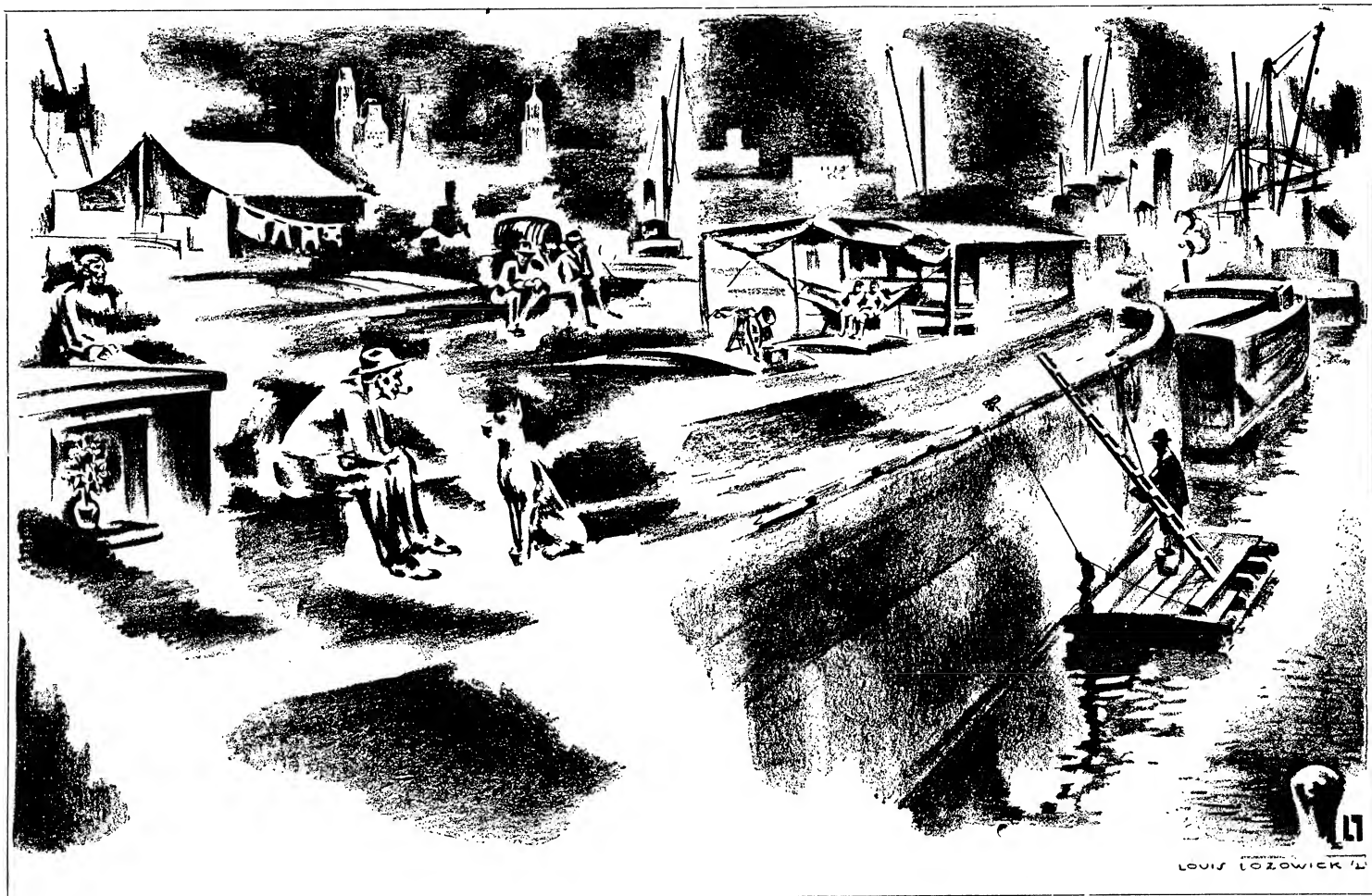
We landed safely in the house, 310—11 St. I sent one comrade back to the hall to tell the chairman that the meeting was off because the speaker had been arrested in Canton (that was a ruse to throw the police off my track). Having thus disposed of the business of the day, I hoped I would be able to enjoy a quiet conference with the host and a few very trusted workers who had gathered in the meantime.

There was a friendly home atmosphere in the house. The woman, a buxom wench of about thirty, was busily cooking, making ready for the ritual of spaghetti, and though it was obvious that she was pregnant, she moved around very quickly, hardly able to conceal her pleasure at having good company for supper. The fire was burning lustily; the odor of cooking was tickling our nostrils; the lights shone in a friendly way; a decanter of wine (without which no spaghetti has any real kick for the Italian) was waiting modestly under cover of a white napkin; our conference seemed to be approaching its natural end with the table about to be spread, when we heard a knock on the door.

IV. THE PEASANT OF PACENTRO

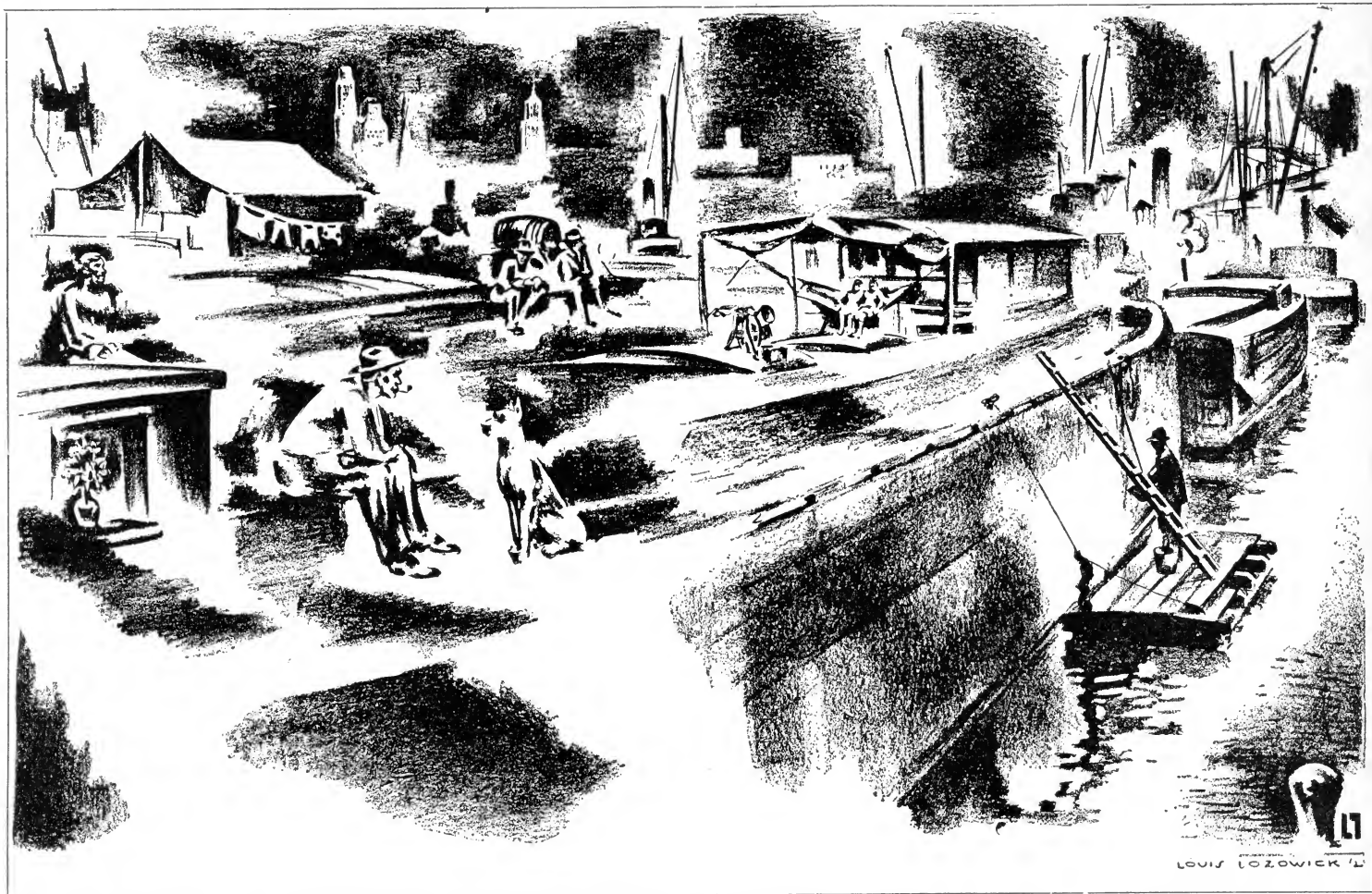
De Cicco, the host, said with a gloomy voice, "The cops." But it was not the cops. Instead a man with a child in his arms stepped in to extend me his greetings. He was John Terracciano, an Italian who had not seen me for twenty years. In the old country John was a peasant cultivating a patch of vineland near Sulmona and one of the first to join the Peasant League organized by myself in Pacentro; in fact, he was even elected president of that first peasant's organization in Italy. Now he could not stay away. He had come to greet his old organizer and friend.

It soon became apparent that our political views differed radically. John was no more the revolutionary peasant he had been in his youth. True he was still proud of the day when he marched under the red banners through the streets of Sulmona and Pacentro. But those were only youth reminiscences to him. He



Barge Dwellers Sunday

Lithograph by Louis Lozowick.



Barge Dwellers Sunday

Lithograph by Louis Lozowick.

had in the meantime migrated into the United States, had settled down on the land, had become a good American citizen, loyal to his adopted country and bristling with all the superstitions one hundred percent Americanism could imbue him with. As a matter of fact, he was a man of good standing in his community and had recently been instrumental in collecting no less than one hundred thousand dollars for the Red Cross. What brought him to me was just an irresistible desire to see his "Carluccio."

How did this prosperous farmer find the way to my host? Here you have a bit of small-town psychology. His wife had been visiting Mrs. De Cicco late in the afternoon. Mrs. De Cicco had bought provisions and was about to prepare a dinner for several persons. Since it was known that I was to be speaking in Beaver Falls that evening, John put two and two together and decided that probably I would be the guest of honor at that feast, and so he tried his luck.

He was certainly glad to see me. He embraced me and planted two big kisses on my cheeks. Then he sat down and, as is the habit of a prosperous man, he wanted me all for himself. In fact he was even out on a missionary venture. In a paternalistic way he tried to persuade me that I had done enough for the cause, that it was my duty to make peace with my mother and all my friends who were worried over my fate, and that it was high time for me to quit fooling around with revolutionary ideas. He offered me, in a sincere and big-hearted fashion, all possible assistance, financial and other, were I to enter the big and glorious field of Business, where there are such splendid opportunities for every one, especially for a man of my abilities.

I was gently resisting John's expostulations, cautious at the same time not to offend a friend bound to me with ties of old homeland experiences, when the door flew open violently, shouts, "Hands up!" reverberated through the room, and a score of policemen and detectives, guns in hand, stepped in. The squad was headed by the chief of police who looked around angrily and asked, "Where is the suitcase?" My first impression was that the gentleman was looking for bombs, but he shouted in high rage, "The books; where are the books?" De Cicco began to explain that no books had been brought into his house; all comrades present were somewhat alarmed, and just at that moment it occurred to me that I had Canadian money in my hip pocket which would serve as evidence of my having travelled across the frontier.

I was not so much interested in the ravings of the police as in the problem of how to get rid of that bit of evidence. I had long noticed that in confusion, when there is a sufficient number of people present, the activities of the individual remain mostly unnoticed. So I, using my legal mind, and the caution born out of long practice, stepped backward to the stove, gently extracted the bundle from my hip pocket and sent it down into the flaming coal. Eighty dollars of very good Canadian money was turned into ashes. In the meantime the chief of police was insisting on searching the house, while De Cicco, an American citizen, was lecturing him on the Bill of Rights and the Constitutional guarantees of Americans and demanding a search warrant which, of course, was absent.

At that moment the eyes of the chief of police met mine. The man stopped arguing with De Cicco for a while as if trying to collect his thoughts. Suddenly, using the gun which he held in front of De Cicco's face, he fired a shot at me. First we thought that De Cicco was shot. Mrs. De Cicco screamed wildly. There was a great hubbub in the room; a detective pushed her aside, poking his elbow in her stomach. The woman fainted. The shouts of those present made a bedlam. I stepped forth and said to the chief of police, "I am Tresca. If you are looking for me, why don't you get me and leave these people in peace?" A man in civilian clothes (of whom I learned later that he was the head of the county detectives) pointed a gun at my breast saying, "Yes, you are the man we want. Come along, you S. O. B."

V. CHRISTIAN BROTHERHOOD

The situation seemed to be clearing. They had gotten the man they were looking for. I told my friends to remain quiet and wait. Nothing could be done for the time being but follow orders. Still, a friend of mine from Lathrobe, Pennsylvania, who was also present in the room, considered it improper to let me go alone. On account of his sharp remarks addressed to the police, he was also seized.

It was wartime. The practice of tarring and feathering, the practice of hanging had been revived. My mind involuntarily began to travel in this direction. I was therefore relieved when I found myself in a good old jail, behind iron bars. The other fellow was with me, which meant that I could while away the tedium with friendly conversation. Before long the chief who had fired the shot came to question me. It was all about the suitcase, about the books. That black bulky suitcase had caught his imagination. Feeling quite safe in my involuntary retreat, I was just joshing him along, telling all sorts of crazy stories and observing that the stern keeper of the Law was relenting.

In a moment, however, the door of the adjoining room flew open. We heard the trampling of feet and frantic shouts. "Where is the chief? Where is the chief? I'll kill him." The chief grew very pale and moved to the door where he was confronted by De Cicco crying angrily, "You beast. You've killed him. You've killed him."

I stepped forth and asked for an explanation. De Cicco could only mutter that *John was dead*. De Cicco grabbed the chief, shaking him, in anger. A group of policemen had their hands full tearing him away. There was confusion in the jail. We two prisoners were left alone, speechless. Who killed John? Why was he killed? How strange it all was! A leaden gloom settled on us.

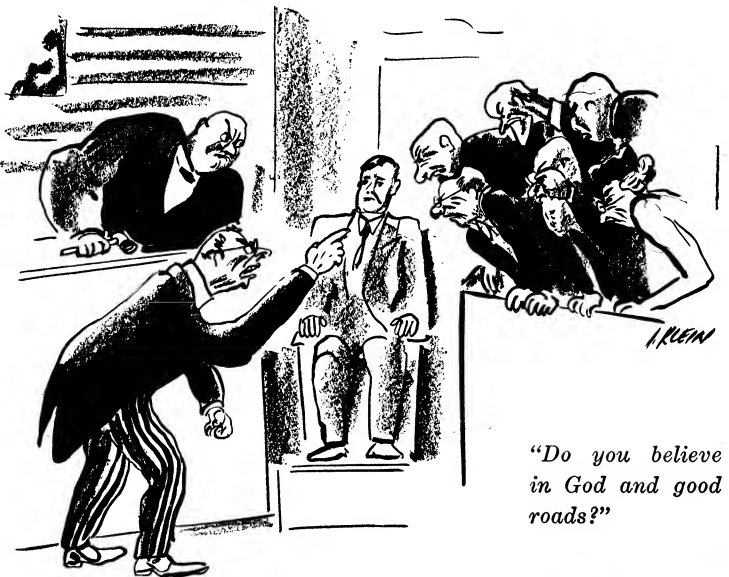
Shortly the chief came back with two policemen. He opened the door, saying: "Get out of here. Take the train and go, but never come back." That was all he said. Two policemen accompanied us to the station and from there to Pittsburgh with orders to see that we "kept on going."

At the station we found the big, husky fellow from Rochester who was going back home. From him I learned the facts. It appears that the bullet intended for me had entered John's stomach; that John, realizing the seriousness of the situation thought it wise to keep still until the gang took me away; that the man was afraid of a massacre in case he screamed. As soon, however, as we went, he silently fell over the table, still holding the six month old baby in his arms. Only then De Cicco and others realized that he was badly wounded. An ambulance was called, the man was taken to the hospital and quickly operated on, but there was little hope for his life.

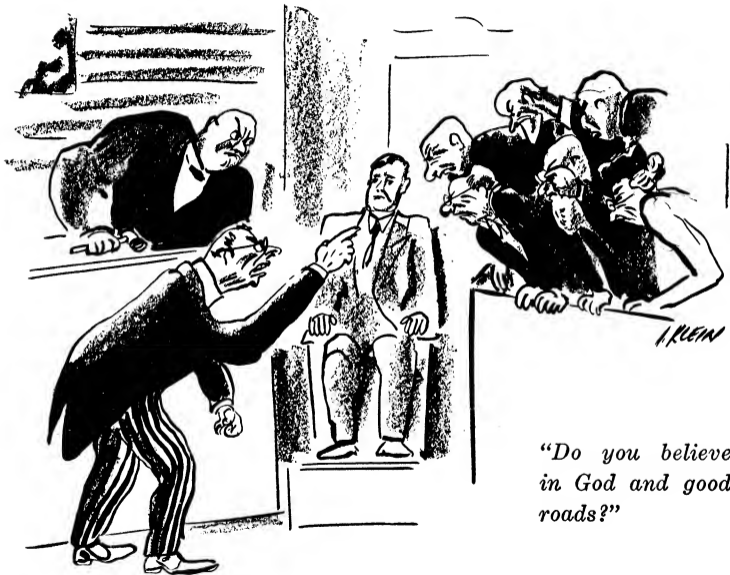
Poor John! Poor respectable and prosperous citizen of his prosperous adopted country. When, finally, I reached New York, the day before Christmas, I found a telegram at home stating laconically that John was dead. He left a wife and nine children behind.

Wartime Christmas was entering the big city of New York. There was a rejoicing in spite of, or perhaps even on account of, the war. The priests were talking about the charm of Christian brotherhood. Bells were tolling. Everybody was bringing gifts to his little ones. And there, way up in Pennsylvania, a father of nine children lay dead. Why?

That was a sad Christmas for me.



"Do you believe in God and good roads?"



*"Do you believe
in God and good
roads?"*



Drawn by Jan Matulka.

TWO CITIES

By HERMAN SPECTOR

Three months I had been out of work. It was winter, the days were clear and cold, people passed by wrapped in coats their faces ruddy breathing mist, the chestnuts roasted fragrantly on corners by the parks, and outside department-stores the tinkling bells, Salvation Army grafters pimping christ.

I hardly noticed anything of what passed about me, each day I had grown more and more lackadaisical, dull, despairing. My nerve had gone, I was will-less, I had lost all self-respect. My eyes looked out with abject horror at the world, at the prospect of a lonely, degraded death; I could not sleep in the park any more but shuffled through the streets at night, the chill blasts choking my sobs and roaring through my painful brain. Somewhere waited a wife, somewhere two anxious little children whimpered from cold and hunger. I placed a clammy hand to my throbbing forehead, and retched. I moaned, with a sound as though something were being torn out of me. I was dizzy, vomiting like a drunk . . .

The night was an awful emptiness. Lamps glowed grinning like idiots. Occasionally a cab came jouncing by. The streets were black glass over which stray figures glided, vanishing ignominiously from sight. I trembled within me, it was cold, it was very cold. Stumbling below huge buildings of commerce, listening to the wash of rain in the gutters, I could not feel I had any real existence, but thought I lay trapped in a horrible dream, and I stared at the distant streets with vague incredulity. It could not be a man, in a city of men, who suffered thus! No!—A dim underground murmur, the wash of the rain in gutters, trickled ceaselessly.

I walked on and on. Suddenly I was in the deepest part of the slums. Tenements stood dazed under the ether of night, gnawed by the rain and the frost, rotten with filth. The wind wheezed through the streets, and the slum sighed, and the signs swaying in the wind creaked. Here is no sleep, but brief pause between ominous labours, a fitful relapse into death . . . I groaned. We shall have no rest all our lives long, we shall know no peace. I passed familiar alleyways, dark deserted side-streets, the grim story of this place upon my lips and in my heart. I passed furiously, with fists clenched . . .

. . . shimmering, somewhere, high like a symbol, a sign, to my glazed hopeless eyes, a great electric message in the night sky. Alone, aimlessly moving in the dead city, I wondered as the thing began to gleam more definite; now white, now red, approaching. What beacon is this, I thought, what salve to the tortured, what promise of faith to the lowly, degraded . . . I remembered the pleasant gospels of Jesus . . . **TUDOR CITY** (It flashed into my sight)—**T U D O R C I T Y !**—

I burst into a mad laugh that echoed through vast caverns of houses in successive waves of awakening sound. The rich had

built a city within the city! At the very outskirts of the slums, black, melancholy, beside the busy slaughter-houses, rose tall glittering towers, wall-encompassed exquisite gardens, magnificent festive halls! The signs blazed ferociously: **Tudor City!** And precise certain limousines rolled in and out the guarded gates. The gospels of Jesus—they are fulfilled!—these are the meek who have inherited earth!—

Then let me be cunning, I whispered, and my words became a wind; a great strength filled me. Let me know that there are two worlds, two cities . . . Everywhere they are tinkling pious bells, it is the season now to point the eyes upward to heaven, and each day our lot becomes more and more difficult to bear, we grow wretched and our patience wears thin . . . a city for the rich, and a city for the poor! Good!—Hooohhnck? With a musical interrogative toot, and backward blur of swift smoke, a town-car passed smoothly . . . And it seemed that the wind shrieked in sudden anger, vengefully it smote and whipped and lashed everywhere about—rising from the slums it gathered untold force and fury until I thought the gleaming towers trembled at their base . . .

The gray dawn was approaching. I knew I must have a job, and I cursed hysterically. A job? . . . I thought of those I had held. In the lumber yards, twelve hours a day, the evil grub and relentless toil; on the railroads, men with arms and legs lopped off, crippled and strained, fearful of momentary dismissal; in the factory, wages below existence-level, all the bloody slavery of a sweatshop; in the warehouses, on the wharves, in ships, on roads, in the belly of the earth or high above it . . . Keep your lousy jobs, shrewd sneering Bosses! Who needs your jobs? Me?—you Bastards! . . . The gray dawn had come already. I sat down in the park and slept. All about me roared the city, whirling in spasmodic flashes of life, but I did not care, I did not know. I dreamed of a city for the rich, and a city for the poor.

Against the Attempted Seizure of Rice-crops by the Landlords*

(A Japanese Poem)

By J. KAMIMURA

*The red flag waves in the breeze.
The fruit of the whole year's toil,
Is about to be plundered
By the idle landlords,
Reap, now, comrades, quick!*

*

*The red flag waves in the breeze.
In the hands of the gathering peasants
There are sickles, sickles, sharpened sickles.*

*

*Like a storm, the police are coming.
Before they arrive,
Peasant girls,
Reap, quick, reap!
The red flag waves in the breeze.*

*

*The rustling sound of the moving sickles,
The rice-plant is being reaped.
Still more groups of peasants are hurrying here.
The red flag waves in the breeze!*

*

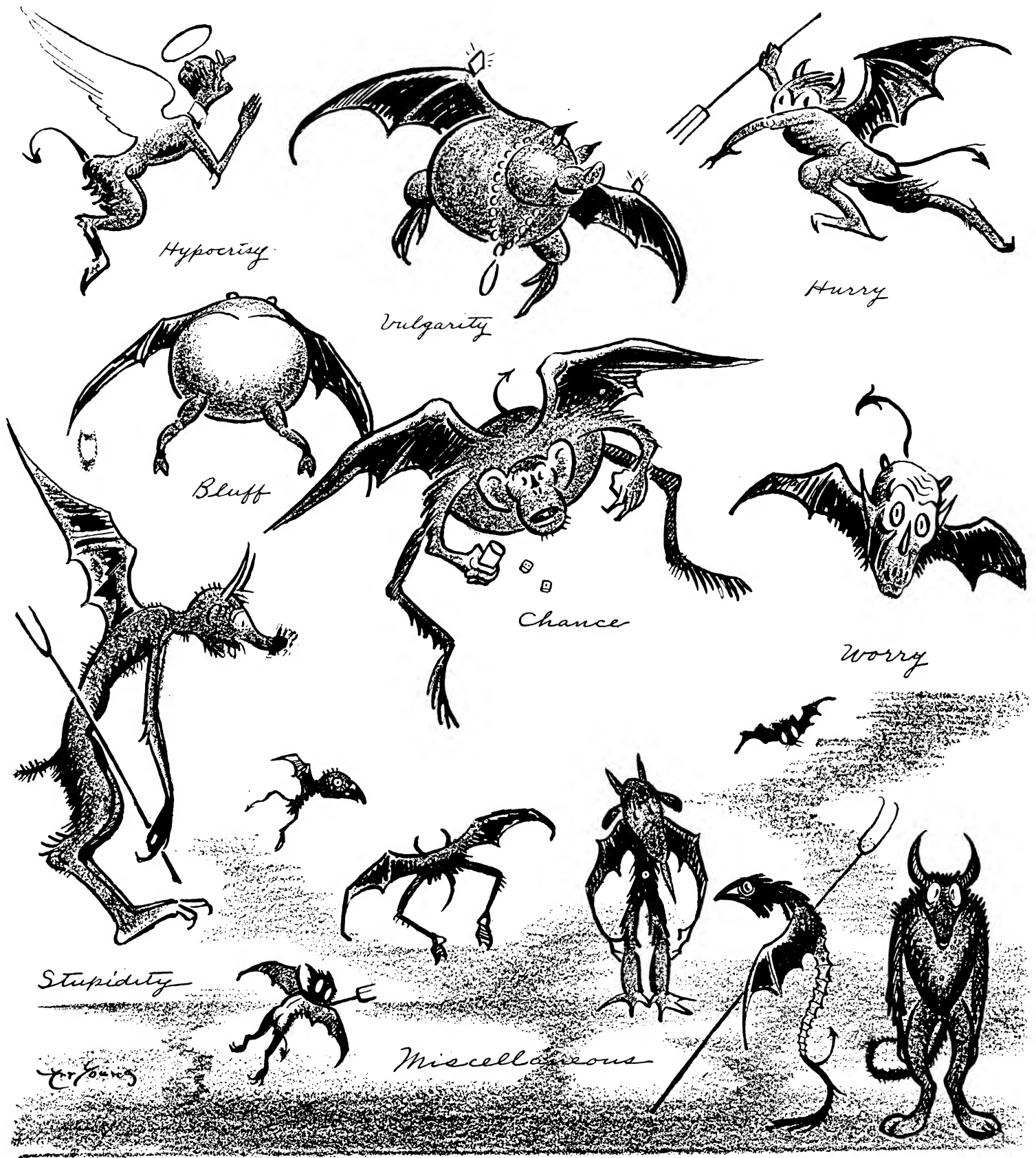
*"With such a spirit, let's build a world of our own"
From the now barren fields, like a wacry,
The peasant song rises.
The red flag waves in the breeze.*

*In Japan poorer peasants, as a whole, are more militant than city workers. The land disputes, therefore, take very serious form. In fact the landowners went so far as to prohibit peasants, through legal authority, to enter the field when the harvest is approaching. They claim the fields are their private property. The peasants are not silent. They ignore the authorities and reap, for the crops are theirs. This poem appeared in Souki, the banner organ of the NAPF, National Proletarian Writers League of Japan.

—D. UCHIDA, translator.



Drawn by Jan Matulka.

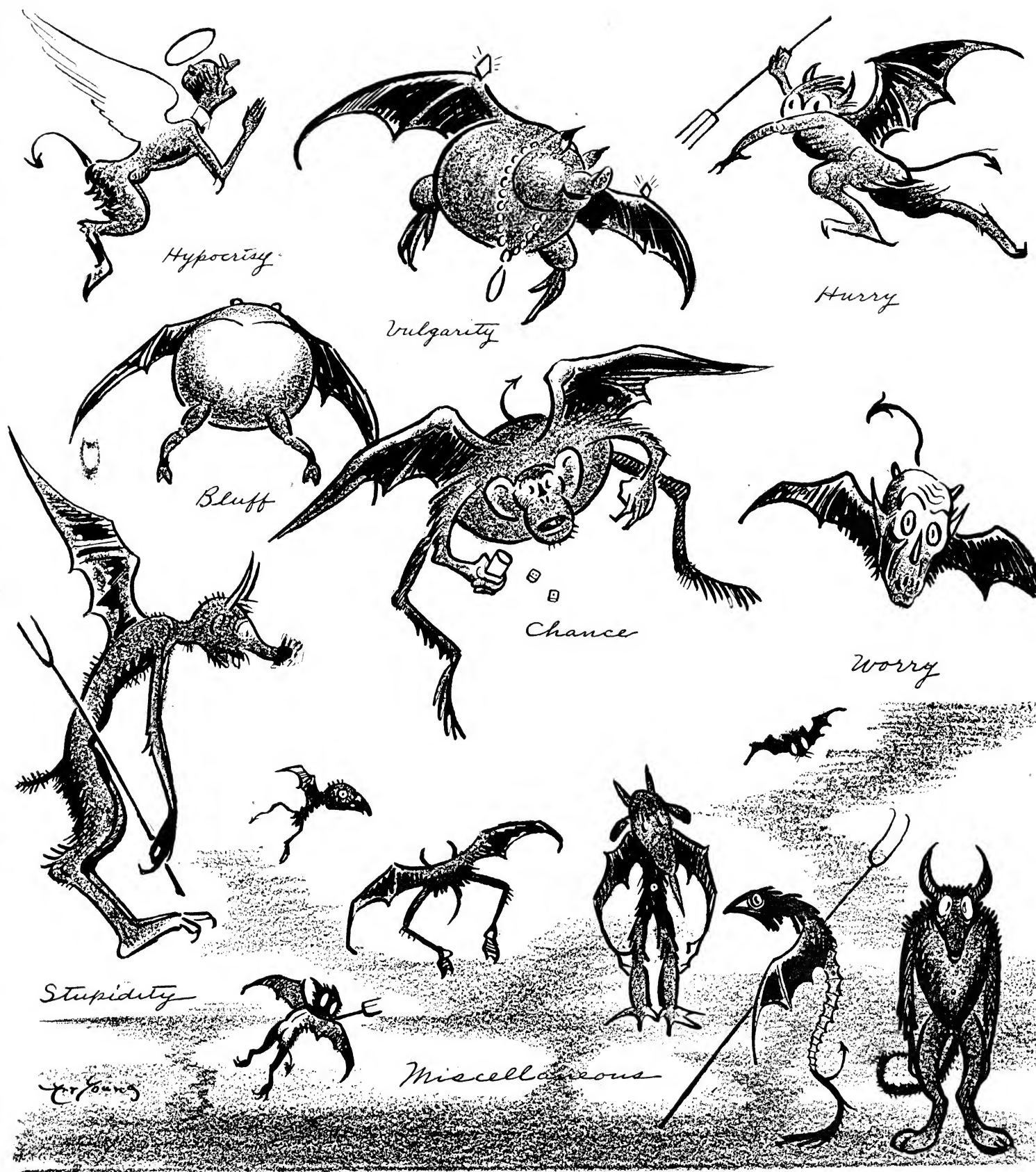


**"IT'S HELL"
WRITES
ART YOUNG**

New Masses:

You ask me for a picture of a group of devils. Devils—not the beautiful angels such as are seen in the conventional Christmas magazines. Here they are—a drawing of a few of them—little devils who are the emissaries—aide de camps—messengers—ambassadors—deputies and guards of the Old Boy himself—the Devil-in-Chief of this twentieth century Hell:—Capitalism.

Yours, ART YOUNG



"IT'S HELL" WRITES ART YOUNG

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AMERICAN JUNGLE NOTES

By MICHAEL GOLD

The best book I've read this month is *Siberian Garrison*, by Rodion Markovits.* It is the story of the Hungarian war prisoners in Russia.

Let me waste no words, but testify at once: this book is a masterpiece. I am sure it stands beside Dostoevsky's *House of the Dead*, it is one of the classics of our time.

Its theme is bigger than war itself. Its theme is the capitalism that creates war. Anonymous man is out of a job. He has a wife and child. He hunts for work. War interrupts. He is drafted. He succumbs to patriotic illusions. He tries to make himself a soldier. He fights in battles. The Russians take him prisoner. He reaches a Siberian detention camp.

Here the real story begins. The little man believed war had changed men's souls. He finds the camp a microcosmic capitalist state, where men are the same as ever.

Men gamble, profiteer, exploit each other, prostitute themselves. They are as ever vain, jealous, greedy and despotic. Caste prevails. Chauvinism remains. Nothing is different—it is the same old capitalist world functioning in new distorted, amazing ways.

The horror of this new prison-world against which capitalist-man tries to re-establish his own shallow values makes for the irony and contrast in this book.

Realism, detail, facts—the notes of a superb reporter. Sublimation, form, rhythm, the unrhetorical poetry of the modern artist. Epic simplicity. Epic humanity. A masterpiece.

No American knows how to write this kind of book. Why hide the fact—we are too immature. We are capable of great things, but have not the courage to do them. Americans are still barbarians. They really despise thought; their sole admiration is for sensation and technique.

The Rolls-Royce, swift, beautiful, hard and perfect, best symbolizes the bourgeois American soul so rapidly crystallizing before our eyes. This is the surface. The machine has a hidden flaw.

Americans never tell the real truth within them. They fear it. This will lead to the ultimate rottenness that must and shall consume America.

Americans today are not direct. Americans are not simple. Americans are running away from themselves. One must go to the Europeans and Asiatics today to find truth revealed.

Rodion Markovits, at one step, takes his place beside Gorky, Nexo, and other heroes in the spiritual pantheon of the revolutionist. His *Siberian Garrison* is another book to fling at the thick heads of those silly bourgeois aesthetes who have been whimpering, since the drunken Verlaineists, that "propaganda" can never be "art."

*Translated from the Hungarian, by George Halasz. Published by Horace Liveright. \$3.50.



Drawn by Jan Matulka.

THE STOCK MARKET

The American capitalist system may last another ten years. It may last another hundred. But when it begins to reel, crack and tumble into chaos, as it must, millions of tiny naive Americans will buzz around with the same kind of bewildered horror as they did last month, when the stock market crashed.

Who would have thought it possible? Who, in California, will admit to himself that another earthquake is sure to come? Beautiful American faith! The lousy saints of the middle ages were tortured into insanity by doubt. They wrestled with demons for their faith. But no American suffers from these spiritual pangs. He believes more firmly in American capitalism than any Teresa ever believed in a male God.

That is, in fair weather. Let me admit, I enjoyed the recent music of the victim's howls and tears. Too long has one had to submit to the airs of these cockroach capitalists. Every barber was dabbling in Wall Street. Every street-cleaner expanded his chest proudly as he maneuvered his horse-droppings into a can. Wasn't he a partner with Morgan and Rockefeller in American prosperity?

Then came the dawn. According to good authorities, it was a most carefully arranged dawn. It was planned by theatrical masters. It was a well-rehearsed dawn, and could not fail to arrive at the proper moment. The big bankers needed a market in which to sell their foreign bonds. So they destroyed their rival, the stock market.

At least, so I have been told. What's the difference, anyway, as to who fleeced the butcher, the baker, the newsboy and "labor leader" of their Wall Street easy money? The job was done; it was a good job; the people I care most about were not gambling; the others are back where they belong.

I called it crap-shooting in a *New Masses* article two months ago; I said also, it affected American literature. I imagine many people thought at the time I was brash. But the market cracked; many Broadway producers found their audiences gone; many publishers have had to cut down their production of books; I was right. But this doesn't matter either. The point is, there will be other crops of suckers and many more crashes before the final crash.

Isn't it strange: Soviet Russia builds railroads, dynamos, factories; makes love, writes books, leads the most creative life in the world today; yet it has no stock market?

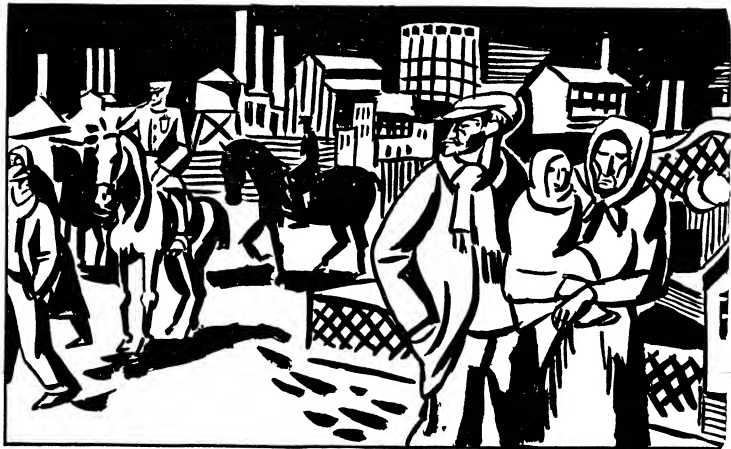
Gambling is not immoral. It is only puerile. It is, like booze and musical comedies, the refuge of people bored to death with a society based on a single motive: Profit. There is in America today, a great national fever of boozing, sexualizing, and gambling. People find nothing to live for except money-making. That becomes boring in time. Americans are overworked and bored. So their amusements verge on delirium.

CONSTIPATION.

Dear Dr. William J. Robinson—Please write a serious parody on the Will Durant hokum. Call it *The Story of American Constipation*. Show how the colonial Americans were not constipated. Show, as the industrial age came in, and the big fortunes after the Civil War, how pills and patent medicines came in, too. Prove, by statistics, that for every new factory town built in America, another army of tight-bowelled martyrs to industrialism sprang up, and a flock of new infallible remedies.

Demonstrate the present state of affairs. One of every five Americans has pyorrhea, say the advertisements. Prove that every American today has constipation. List the thousands of specifics, from Cascarets to Mineral Oil.

You will be writing a history of American civilization in this book. You are the man to do it, with your social insight and medical wisdom. Europe and Asia do not yet understand America. They have illusions about us. Tell them we are all constipated,



Drawn by Jan Matulka.



A Drop In The Market

Drawn by Wm. Gropper.

and they will not try to imitate us so humbly. Thanks, my dear Doctor, Yours sincerely, A Nature Lover.

N. Y. NEWSPAPER CRITICS.

It is all a paid job. There is not a man among them who loves the theatre as Bernard Shaw did when he was a critic; or who has his sense of social and æsthetic movements, and can interpret the passing theatre from some fundamental viewpoint; the critic's task.

One exception must be noted: J. Brooks Atkinson of the *New York Times*. This critic maintains an honesty and dignity of purpose that are worthy of respect. He never descends to the wise-crack, that last refuge of the inferior mind. One feels he is tired of gaudy, fleshy, dollar-hunting Broadway. In his writings, one finds now and then a note of prophecy and protest. He seems to know the eternal theatre—that voice of the masses, that forum of mass-beauty, of mass-revolt, hope and despair. He has believed with Romain Rolland in a heroic mass-theatre. He has acquainted himself with the grand projects of the Russian and German theatre pioneers. He is a student. He is at times a pioneer, a philosopher, an integrator.

The rest are time-servers, the sycophantic slaves of a commercial machine.

With their wise-cracks, they try to clothe the despair and emptiness in their minds.

One pities such helpless decadents. What a future lies before them—years of nastiness, weary wise-cracking, self-disgust and play-reviewing. How often must they envy the happy lot of plumbers and bricklayers! But they were trained to no good trade—not even to that of dramatic criticism. So they must go on. And that's why no one except gamblers and vaudevillians

writes plays any more in America. Look at the jury one must face.

A *revolutionary* play has about as much chance with this gang as Vanzetti had with Judge Thayer. And I don't mean the play I wrote, either; I mean Sean O'Casey's *Silver Tassie*; John Howard Lawson's *Processional*; John Dos Passos's *Airways, Inc.*; Em Jo Basshe's *The Centuries*; Eugene O'Neill's *Hairy Ape*; Ernest Toller's *Masse Mensch*; Hickerson and Anderson's *Gods of the Lightning*; Upton Sinclair's *Singing Jailbirds*; and others I don't remember at this moment.

The sparrows twittered in alarm when they beheld the elephants. And each little sparrow flitted its little tail, and dribbled, out of fear, a string of hard, nasty little wise-cracks.

One cannot be too harsh with them; they themselves have no decency or honor in their attitude to playwrights. It is only the large commercial producers, with lots of money for advertising who are treated respectfully by them. When a small pioneering group like our New Playwrights' Theatre or the Irish Players attempts to do something, all the stored-up venom of these frustrates is unloosened. They become a lynching party. They are the slum-proletariat of literature. They are like a species of degraded factory slave who cringes before every boss and foreman, then comes home to beat his helpless wife and children. Ah, what fun! What fun to assassinate the brave, the new, the friendless!

St. John Ervine, an English theatre critic, spent six months recently on the *N. Y. World*. He had many prejudices; he had no fears. He wrote what he really believed. Everyone was shocked and amazed. Everyone sighed with relief when he was sent back to England. This man was a dangerous freak. He was honest.

A NOTE ON INDIVIDUALISM.

Philosophic individualism, as the social historians remind us, is a fairly new concept. It was unknown in the ancient world. It was the child of the Lutheran reformation, which in turn, was the child of the bourgeois revolution.

Its legitimate inheritors today are such people as Bishop Cannon and the stock market Christians.

But the American intellectuals think they are individualists, too. Some of them say it is indispensable to "Art." It is not. Individualism in art leads only to little cafe cliques and minor eccentrics. Dante, Goethe, Whitman, Shakespeare; few of the giants have been individualists. They shared in the world-vision of their times.

The great artist is unique in feeling, in power, and insight. But this is not individualism. It is only genius. The great artist is a man. He shares the ideas and life of mankind. He shares it transcendently, sublimely. He knows no secrets not known to other men. But he correlates and sublimates the common secrets.

Scientists are none of them individualists. Their work is based on pure communism of ideas. There are petty artists who try to sneer at science. How charming, this spectacle of a contributor to American poetry magazines looking down on Einstein!

Individualism first became an art cult in France (Verlaine, absinthe, bourgeois-baiting, belief in demons, angels, etc.).

In America it has assumed a new face. It sets up a metaphysical battle of two straw men—industrialism versus the individual, and orates against the former.

Its chief argument seems to be that collectivism is already established in America, and look at the results!

This is a fallacy. America is an industrial anarchy. It is a world of competition, individualism.

Two world forces are moving to make it collective—Big Business and the Social Revolution.

One would establish a collectivism of contented slaves—the benevolent feudalism.

The other would establish a collectivism of free, self-ruled, creative human beings—a Workers' Republic.

There are many kinds of collectivism, as there are many kinds of individualism.

The businessman is a rabid individualist. He wants nothing to interfere with his life, liberty and pursuit of profit.

The intellectual is a different kind of individualist. He is a hater of mediocrity, uniformity, materialism.

The businessman fights for his religion of profit. The intellectual runs away. Almost every book written by an American

TRAINING STOCK QUOTATIONS.

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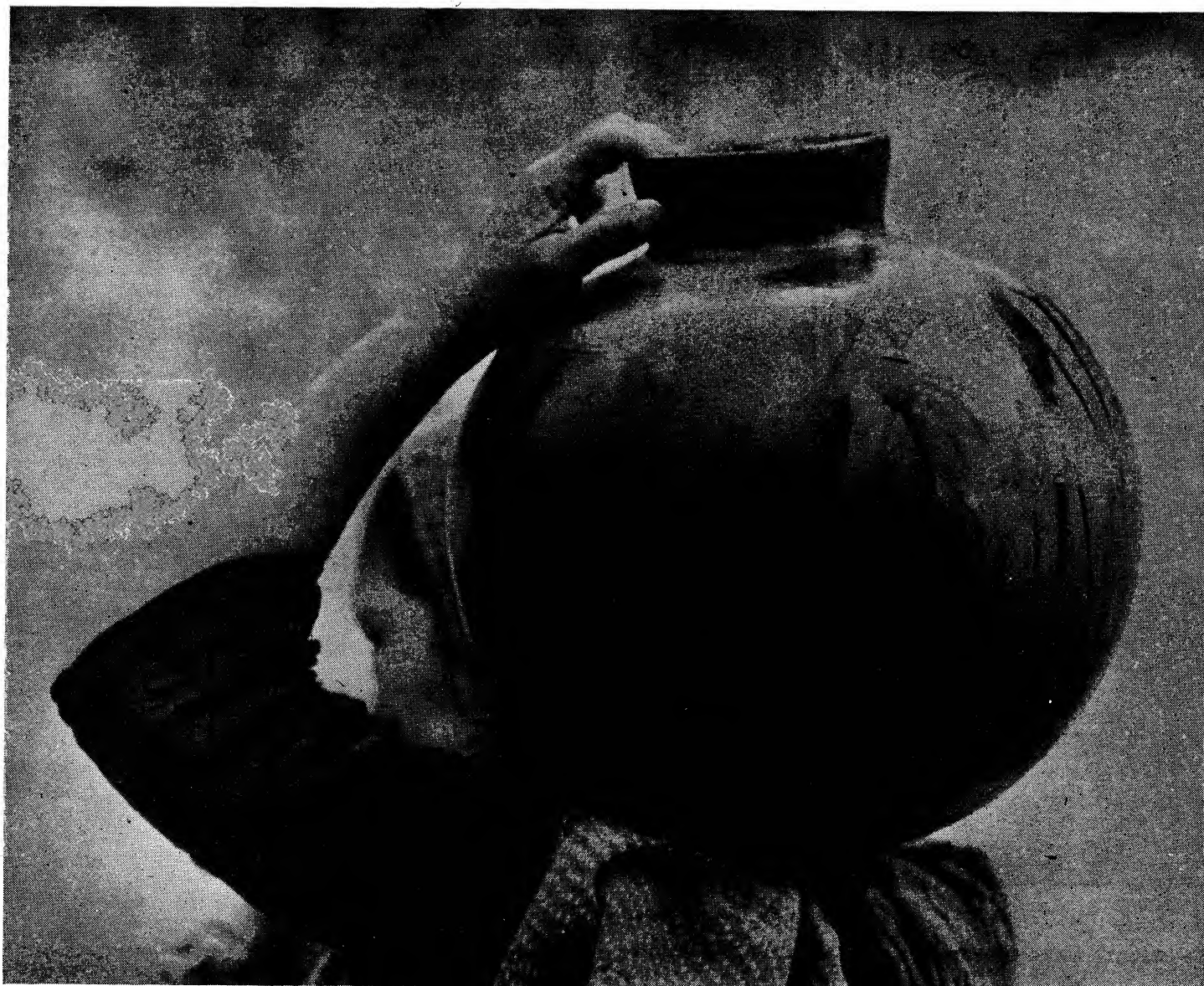
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Crescent		44	85
Golden Cycle		16.00	85
Granite		1.00	85
Portland		1.00	85
Limited Gold MINES		1.04	85
Holly Oil		.05	85
Holly Development		.80	85
MacKinnin		.05	85
T-16 Nevada		.05	85
Holly Sugar		72.50	85
Holly SUGAR com		38.74	85

Sales.	High.	Low.	Net.
5,000 Dick	66	60	63
1,500 Golead	64	58	61
2,000 Grandview	56	52	54
15,000 Jack W.	128	117	122 1/2
1,300 Montana Mines	34 1/2	32	33 1/2
500 Sherman	71	71	71
1,000 SilverSmith	07 1/2	07	07 1/4

TODAY		High	Low	Open
2.009 Acme Oil	1	1.04	1.04	1.04
4.070 Acme Oil	1	1.04	1.04	1.04
27.074 Alax Oil	1	1.04	1.04	1.04
1.100 Amity	1	1.04	1.04	1.04
13.053 Amulet	2	1.04	1.04	1.04
26.700 Arco	2	1.04	1.04	1.04
3.326 Alberta Pacific	2	1.04	1.04	1.04
2.000 Barry	2	1.04	1.04	1.04
2.960 Balse Mesa	2	1.04	1.04	1.04
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Drawn by Wm. Gropper.



In Mexico—

Photograph by Tina Modotti.

in the last decade is but another adventure in escape from the social realities.

Individualism has become merely a convenient label for the American "escapists." One would respect them more if they were honest, and frankly called themselves the "escapists."

Occasionally they become collective-minded, when there is a chance for bringing liquor back to the U. S. A. Most of these spiritual supermen forgot their pose in the recent election. They descended from their eagle-heights to vote for Al Smith, booze and Tammany Hall.

I like liquor now and then, but not at such a price. And what is chiefly wrong with America is not prohibition—but capitalism.

These individualists have no real quarrel with the capitalist system. With a profound biological instinct, they sense it is necessary to them. They believe in classes. They announce in every word they write that they belong to the superior class. But the business men won't acknowledge the kinship. This is the rub.

The individualists want an "improved" capitalist system in which they will receive, without too much effort, a big share in the booty. Alas, this will always be impossible in a capitalist state, where "spiritual" values can never hope for a place in the stock market quotations.

The business man knows what he wants. He works with the social realities to get it. The revolutionists know what they want, and work with the same.

The intellectuals don't know what they want, and wander in a kind of twilit no-man's land, where both sides, by sheer accident, are sure to pot them.

Poor individualists. There is not a place to go. Europe is

just as bad as America; the Orient is a vast cauldron of social problems; the primitive lands are in the world battle of two collectivismisms.

In Europe and Asia the intellectuals have been forced into social-mindedness. And they display a greater ratio of talent and genius than do the "individualist" intellectuals of America.

No, gentlemen; neither art, nor science, nor philosophy, nor genius, will lose on that great day when you decide to stand your ground in America, not run away.

The thing goes beyond theories. What seems to be needed is a little courage.

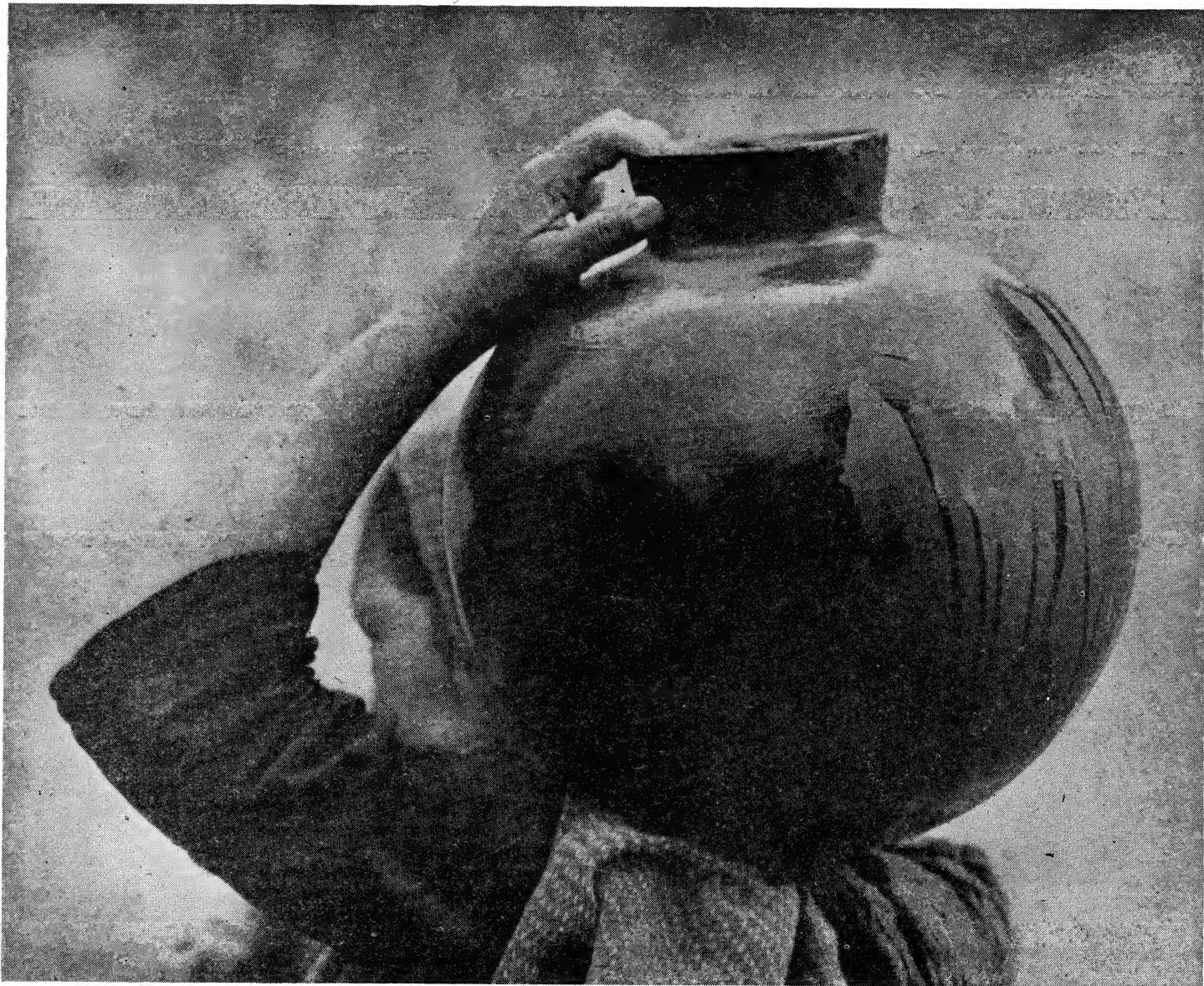
IN A TROPIC PORT

*We're in port now, and all day long
It's scaling paint over the side,
With the chipping hammers singing their song,
And this tropic sun on your hide.*

*There're the winches rattling overhead,
And we working under the slingo.
Dangerous,—once saw four men crushed
When a line let go.—*

*But what the hell—tonight we'll dine
Ashore, and there'll be brown girls and
raw red wine.*

A. S. BERGER.



In Mexico—

Photograph by Tina Modotti.

THE COLOR LINE IN ART

By SCOTT NEARING

Sam Pickens grew up on a cotton patch in South Carolina. At eighteen, after a number of adventures, he found himself on Chicago's South Side working half a day in a restaurant and putting all of his spare time into a public school education.

Sam liked geography and history. He ate up numbers. Often, in class, when arithmetic problems were given, Sam knew the answer before he had put a pencil on his paper.

It was in his drawing classes, however, that Sam scored his greatest successes. He had never been in a drawing class before he reached Chicago. He did not know what drawing was. But even in the country school near his South Carolina home, where he had spent a few months each winter, he would slip into the room before class and put figures and faces on the black-board. He always rubbed them out promptly as soon as he heard anyone coming, but one morning the teacher slipped in quietly, found Sam at work, and protested vigorously against his waste of chalk.

Drawing classes in Chicago were a revelation to Sam.

The teacher in charge of drawing was a "special" who taught only this subject. She was a white woman named Frances Ralston—tall, rather large, dark, with brown eyes and wavy hair. Sam liked her from the first lesson, when he watched her arrange a red rose on a piece of white paper as the model for class work.

Sam finished his rose. Then, slipping an extra piece of paper over the drawing, he began to make idle lines. He glanced across the room. Between him and the north window sat a Negro girl, her head and shoulders silhouetted against the sky. Instantly Sam's pencil was working. His whole being was absorbed. He did not see Miss Ralston across the room; did not hear her coming up behind him; did not feel her standing there till he woke to find the whole class looking and grinning.

"Where is your rose?" Miss Ralston asked.

Sam, shamefaced, uncovered the drawing and silently handed it to her.

"You did this in so short a time?" she questioned.

"Yes'm," from Sam.

"But this!" Miss Ralston held up the silhouetted figure at arms length, examining it.

"Where did you learn to draw?"

"Ah hain't never learned," Sam stammered. It was hard to stand up under so much attention. Beside, he was not sure that Miss Ralston was not making fun of him.

"See me after class," was all she said.

After class Miss Ralston talked to Sam, asking him where he had come from, what he was doing, and whether he would like to take up some special work in drawing. She was friendly and very much in earnest.

"I have a class in a settlement house over near the Yards," she told him. "It meets Wednesdays and Fridays at eight o'clock. Would you like to come?"

Sam hesitated.

"It it's money," she anticipated, "you needn't worry. It costs you only a dollar a month, and the house furnishes some of the materials."

Eagerly Sam accepted. Here was a chance to learn, and here was a teacher who seemed to understand. On Wednesday evening Sam hurried away when the restaurant closed; found the settlement; asked for Miss Ralston, and was given a place among the score of young men and women who were bending over their work. Of this group three beside Sam were Negroes.

The class was using charcoal. Sam had never seen charcoal used for drawing. He had done most of his work with a pencil. But he liked charcoal, and broad, strong lines quickly appeared on his paper. Sam was at home. Miss Ralston nodded her approval.

"You use charcoal as though you were born with a piece in your hand," she encouraged.

By the end of the winter, Miss Ralston was giving Sam special work and special attention. After each class she stayed for a few

minutes to go over some of the things that Sam had done at home and brought in to show her. She examined them—praising, suggesting.

"Sam," she said one Friday evening, late in May, "You're doing splendid work. That pickaninny against the big wagon-wheel, and the woman behind the machine—they live, Sam!"

She hesitated a moment.

"Let me take these two," she said. "When this class ends next week, I am going East for a few days. I want to try something."

Miss Ralston returned the drawings to Sam with many encouraging words. She had showed them to some of her artist friends in the East, who sent Sam messages of appreciation.

After his second winter in the art classes Frances Ralston took a dozen of Sam's pictures East on one of her trips. Sam's hopes ran high! Here was a chance to drop his greasy restaurant job and make a name for himself in a field that meant something to him.

"If we can place only one of these drawings," Miss Ralston told Sam, "It will give you a start. Then you can throw yourself into the work with your whole heart and make a career that will be well worth the effort."

"That's it," Sam agreed. "Ah must get a bit ahead of de game."

Frances Ralston went first to one art editor in one of the great Philadelphia publishing houses. The man looked over the samples of Sam's work spread out on the table before him.

"Genius!" he exclaimed. "Excellent! Where did you find him?"

He got to his feet; rubbed his hands, excitedly; held up the sketches, one by one—near; at arm's length.

"A discovery, Miss Ralston. I congratulate you!"

"There were more than two hundred young men and women in my art classes this last winter," she told the editor. "Among them all this boy is incomparably the best. If it were not for his color" . . .

The editor turned on her.

"His what?"

"His color," Frances Ralston repeated. "He is a Negro."

The art editor sat down very quietly in his chair. Then, one by one, he picked up the drawings and sketches, laid them in a pile, and pushed them a fraction of an inch toward his visitor.

"But," she protested, incredulous, "You don't mean to say that his color makes any difference!"

"Miss Ralston," the art editor said, apologetically. "We serve a very wide public, North and South. We don't even allow Negroes to ride in the front elevators here in this building," he added.

"This boy does not want to ride in your elevators. He lives a thousand miles away. Beside, if you object to dealing with a black man, you can handle the matter through me. I am not afraid . . ."

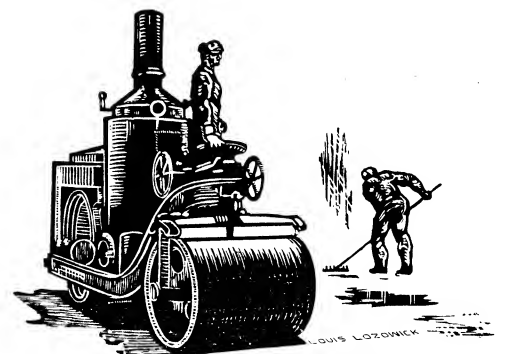
The art editor was a picture of urbanity.

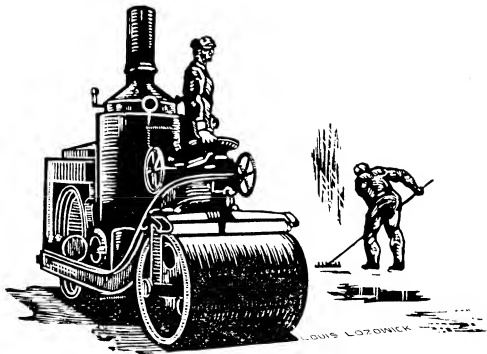
"I quite appreciate how you feel, Miss Ralston," he said. "But if it became known that one of our artists . . . well, let's not discuss the matter any further. Are there any more of your pupils, not so handicapped, from whom we might expect something?"

Frances Ralston stood up.

"Sam Pickens is not handicapped," she said: "As I told you he is the one outstanding talent among my pupils."

"Come in again, Miss Ralston," soothed the editor. "It is







Drawn by Jan Matulka.

GONE WEST

By H. H. LEWIS

I.

*The old-time Yanks, becoming poor, oppressed,
Got as by instinct ever hopeward—West!
Like the moon's pull then flow of habitual tide,
That cosmic uplift: Out to freedom's wide!
Were waves low and Wealth above the laws?
Then lifeward, whee, away from social flaws!
From rented farms and Moloch-rumbling mills,
From deadly slums and all gregarious ills:
Thus brightly toward the vistas trailing far,
Then airily through that prison door ajar—
Away, away, awa-a-a-ay beyond the hills!
With whoops of soul-expansion
In space profoundly good,
With great uplift of backbone
On breath of hardihood,
With a brave glad bound to what unfurled:
Oh! . . . O World!*

*Not like the jobless meanly after bread,
But like the strong lion nobly fled,
He came, Two Sturdy Hands opposing all,
And shoved his ego through the forest wall.
The individual:
To log a cabin "good enough for me"—
Far from the manor of the mortgagee!
To burn the brush and plant a fertile plot,*

always a pleasure.

Already she was in the hall, raging inwardly.

"How did he dare?" she asked herself, fiercely. "Prostituting art to race prejudice! At least in New York . . ." and she went over that afternoon.

She spent a week in New York among her friends—artists, critics, editors, dealers. On the question of Sam's work, the verdict was brief and final. Perhaps, they told her, he might get a hearing in some of the Negro papers. Not much, if any money, however. Then, in time, after years of productive work, maybe an exhibition in one of the private galleries with a chance to get an audience with the critics, and to sell something. If Sam was willing to work hard, without pay, for five or ten years, he might have an opportunity to show New York what he could do.

Frances Ralston returned to Chicago heavy-hearted. She had been so sure that talent would make a way for itself. She did not tell Sam all that she had learned, but she said enough to leave him no doubt. As a passtime; as a hobby, he might use his pen and brush, but no matter what his talent might be, his black face would bar him from the best commercial art field of the United States.

*To reap—his harvest whether good or not,
His weal and woe, one everlasting cheer,
"A dang—long—ways" from the profiteer!
Nature's Olympic view of sky and ground,
Anarchial freedom privately refound,
And the grand sweep of ownership around—
It sunk to bone and there intensified
His-to-the-youngster's self-dependent pride.*

*Then came two "fureign fellers" acting droll
With a look-through dingus and a painted pole—
Then gangs of Irish, fond of exercise,
Filling the lows and ditching through the highs
Twelve hours per day beneath a boss's bawl—
Then spike to rail—and then, with a loud toot
The Age of Steel, the loco-motive brute!
Like clangorous Caesar forcing into Gaul.*

*Until the hoary settler learned again
The ways of money with the ways of men,
The hard-souled competition and the squeeze—
But from his own view now a mortgagee's.*

*From which the tide of proletarian quest
Was moving, moving, farther, farther—West!*

II.

*As the last smoke curled from the cannon's mouth
And the gash flopped shut along the red suffusion—
After the slaves were "freed," and that pretense
Had drummed enough for industry's moral sense—
The working-bleeding stiffs of North and South
Both faced defeat, hard times and disillusion.
"Go West, young man" resounded full of aim.
Then like our solar parent when she hurled
That seething essence forth to form a world,
Pent disillusion shot a creative flame
Far out to freedom, individual claim.*

*And here the Germans, Britons, Swedes and more
Were also coming, faster than before—
Washed from the gaunt hills of feudalism,
Down from the serfdom of democratism,
The real old peasant marl, good for ground,
Eager to spread itself . . . Amerika-bound!*

*That day was epic: the symphony of life
Awoke from trait-bound deeps of destitution,
Awoke and shattered its bars,
Quavered eager and rife,
Sang to the sheer mountains and the stars,
Thundered for the escapist revolution.*

III.

*Well, here we are—ha, bumping fate again,
Millions, millions, millions of idle men!
There's no escaping now: from shore to shore
That individual trend can move no more . . .*

PUGET SOUND: A CONTRAST

*The quiet inlet,
a brave's long, glistening arm
extended proudly,
and the dark, naked body beyond
are burnished with gold,
fiercely burned with the flame of young night.*

*Once, perhaps, a teepee marked the place
with its pointed silhouette.
Perhaps an Indian beached his canoe here,
turning to look northward
and to the east in moody silence,
and then to the pyramid of fire
that glowed and beckoned against the wood.*

*But now a munition plant
stands between trees and water,—
evidence of America's progress,—
a sprawling monument to civilization . . .*

GALE WILHELM



Drawn by Jan Matulka.



Lithograph by Gan Kolski.

FOUNDRY SKETCHES

By ROBERT GATES

THE HOME

I.

"She is a woman; how can she ever know
The danger of the smoking chips that fly
Burning your face or getting in your eye,
How every day the foreman tries to show
His damned superiority, the cry
Of grinding gears all day within your ear,
Or breaking belts that bring a helpless fear
Of all the dirty ways a man might die?"

"I've got a chance to go to East Moline,
Ten cents an hour more, eight hours a day.
I've asked my wife; I can't get her to say.
She doesn't like it; that much is plainly seen.
She doesn't seem to see what it would mean
To me if I could only get away."

II.

"There are some things a man can't understand:
After we have a home to call our own,
And this first spring when all my flowers have grown
Like grateful children underneath my hand,
To go into another town alone
And take cheap rooms above a dirty stair
In some old house—he cannot tell me where—
Would take a woman with a heart of stone.

"He doesn't realize the sun will beat
Like oven-fires upon the roof all day;

*I would be suffering while he was away.
Imagine cooking supper in that heat.
And when he came at night on tired feet
He would expect to find me fresh and gay."*

GROWN UP

"She used to bring my lunch to me
Before the whistle blew.
The napkin on the basket
Was washed and folded new.

"She never asked for nickels
But only smiled at me—
Twice if I gave her any
And ran off happily.

"She does not bring my dinner now;
I wrap it up myself,
And toss the wrinkled package
Upon my bench's shelf."

HOUSEMAN IN THE SHOP

When I stood here on Saturday
Before my vise and bench
A man worked here beside me
At threading with a wrench.

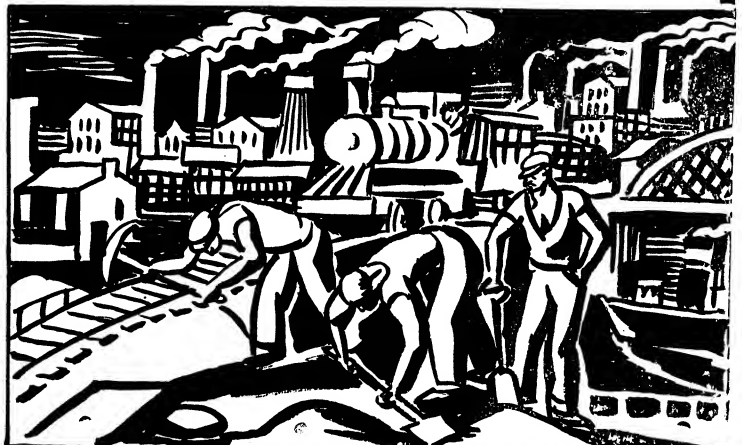
Now slowly, slowly, stitch by stitch
His cuts are being sewed,
While Albert's car lies in the ditch
Upon a lonely road.

Who lay beside him and was found
With blood upon her face:
A lover dying in his arms,
Or harlot in disgrace?

WORN OUT

"Charley had worked for us since we began;
This spring it will be seven years ago.
He was here long enough to see us grow
From five machines to eighty-six that ran
All day and night. We never had a plan
For him beyond the thing he seemed to know,
And for six years, until he got too slow,
We did not have a better planer-man.

"And once at work his mind began to roam;
He said queer things and fell and cut his head.
We had to let him out, and then he cried
Impotently to think of staying home.
He knew he still could do his work, he said,
And came back every week until he died."

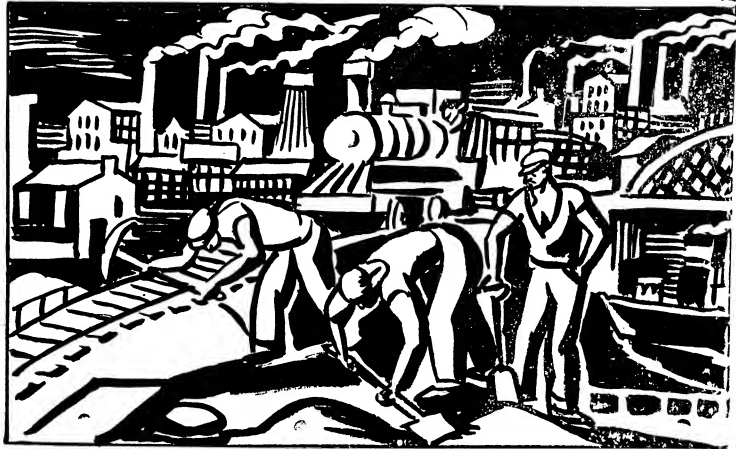


Drawn by Jan Matulka.

DECEMBER, 1929



Lithograph by Gan Kolski.



Drawn by Jan Matulka.

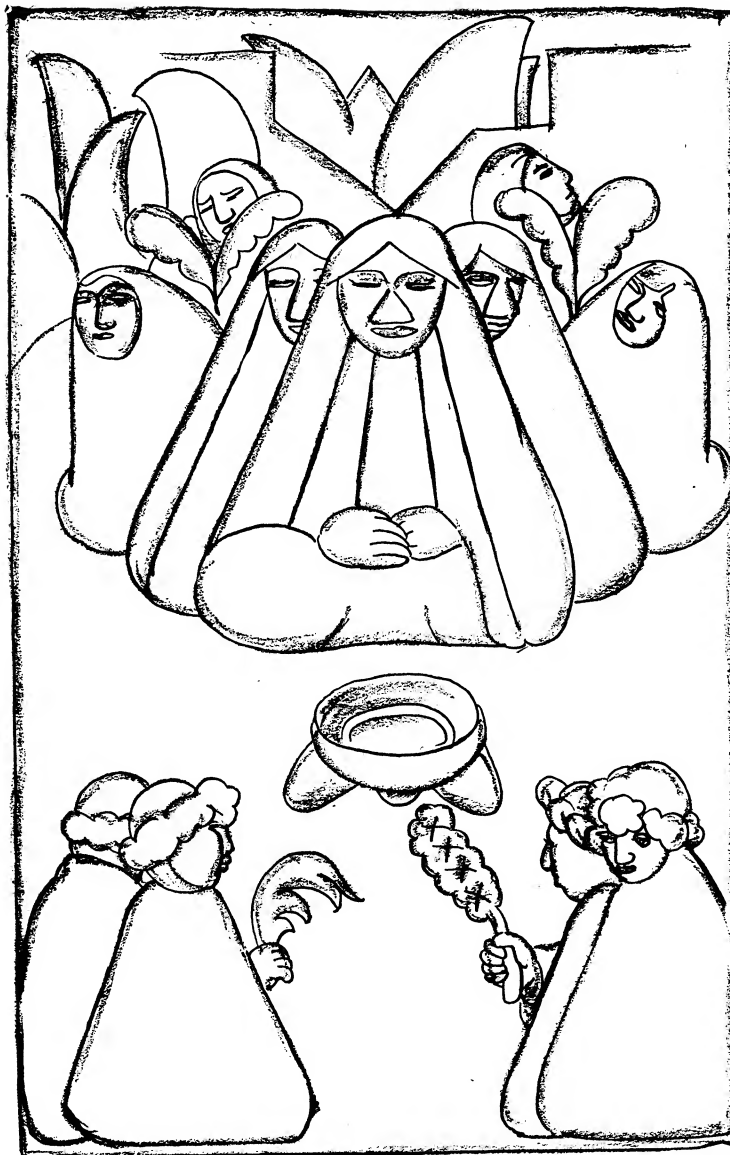
"A" in the Art of the Movie and Kino

By H. A. POTAMKIN

Writing in *Monde*, Henri Barbusse's journal, I said: the American movie can be saved by New York. I did not mean to be taken literally. My meaning was: Hollywood redundancies will keep the film rudimentary and lacking in social, philosophic and æsthetic meaning. A new mind is needed to work upon the rudiments and extend them. Hollywood will not supply that new mind. Hollywood is vested interest. Hollywood is uninspired competence—at its best. Hollywood is empty facility. A critical mind is needed. New York is the concentration center of the critical mind. Even in the use of the instruments (putting aside for the moment philosophy), I look to the director who has not imbibed Hollywood.

There's Rouben Mamoulian of the Theatre Guild. He made a first film at the Astoria studios of the Paramount. He put his camera on rubber wheels and glided it to look upon the players from this angle and that. He was given a typical Hollywood story—no more trashy than the others—and a maudlin heroine, annoyingly reminiscent of Pauline Lord and Gladys Brockwell, and one of those mother-themes (my burlesque good-bad mammy) . . . you know the ingredients—a whore, a pimp, a convent daughter, devoted nuns, a genteel sailor-boy looking for a little wife and a Wisconsin dairy, bichloride of mercury . . . another version of *Stella Dallas*. Given these millstones Mamoulian looked for sympathy to his camera. He proved himself more facile, more competent than Hollywood. But the film *Applause* remains sick stuff. Applause for Mr. Mamoulian must be modified by a censure of him for accepting the theme and the players. A movie, like water, never rises above its source. It can fall below it, but it cannot transcend it. Griffith's *The Birth of a Nation* remains a vindictive platitude, despite its grand composition, because of the thematic, human source in Dixon's *The Clansman*. Vidor could not beat the particularization of the theme of man against the mass in the Johnny Weaver scenario of *The Crowd*. So-called film purists will call my statement literary but I'm too old a hand at movie criticism to be scared by that judgment. What is confusedly termed literary is the substance of the film, its original source, which is converted into the final experience. If the substance is shoddy, specious or spurious, the more dexterous the handling of the instruments, the more remote will be the job from the material. The result is either virtuosity or the inflation of the theme. Mamoulian has proved himself as good a virtuoso as we have in America, but of virtuosity we need no more. We need philosophers who seek great themes told with insight and ultimate import. We need artists who build structures. That Mr. Mamoulian has used his camera as a mobile instrument is O.K. But moving a camera, getting angles, weaving together a couple of different sounds—the mother's chant, the daughter's prayer (what a banal sentimentalism!)—do not build a structure. In the first place the talkie (a misnomer) is a compound film. Its basis is the visual-motor graph (the basis of the simple or mute film). The graph must be constructed with the thought of the placements of sound, simultaneous or progressive placements—in relation to the visual image. There is no such preordained construction in *Applause*, no sustained unified rhythm. Speech is still talkie. Speech should be treated for its abstract qualities as much as sound is. Dialogue is anti-cinema, "speech-as-utterance" is not. I cannot here go into detail with this basic principle; the reader can refer to my contributions to *Close Up* for analyses of my point of view. What I can say here is simply this: Mamoulian has shown himself, in his novitiate, of superior craft-intelligence and daring . . . He brings to the film a proper sophistication in the use of the medium. There is a superb moment where the screen is divided diagonally into two distinct scenes, one of which gradually fills over the second to occupy the full screen. This is an active use of the split screen, suprisingly neglected in America. This alone would indicate what a fresh eye can do for the movie.

Whose fault it is I do not know, but a character of importance



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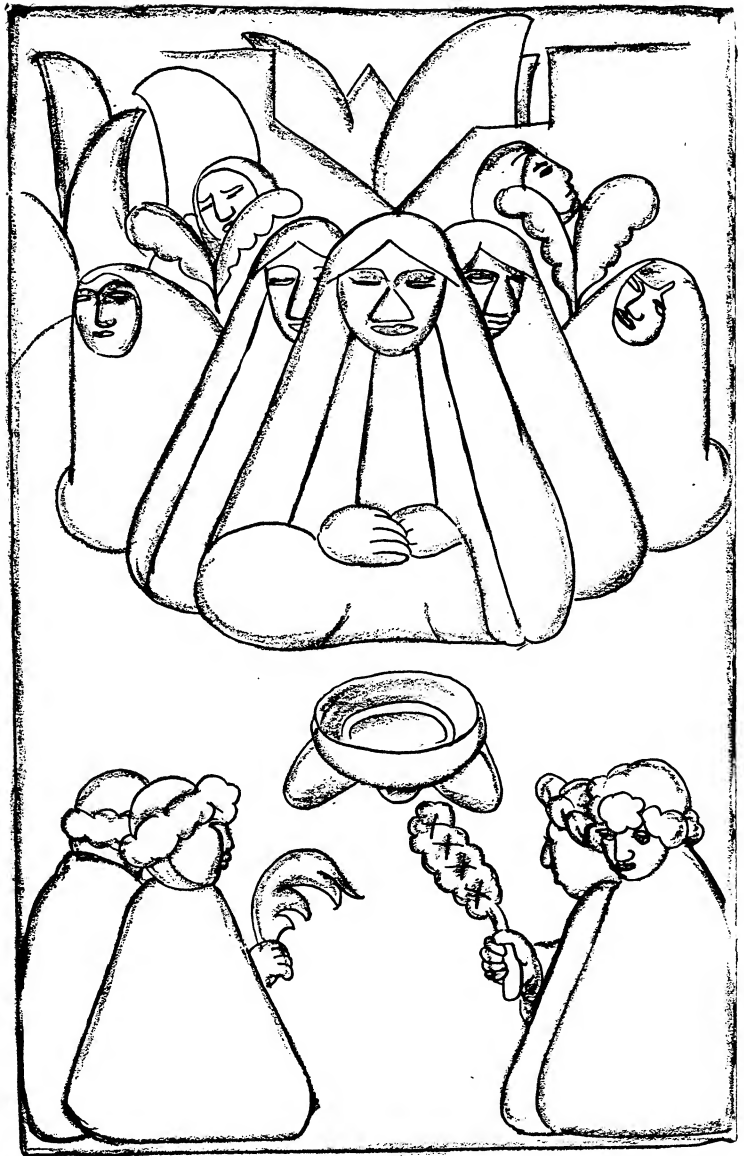
Drawn by Xavier Guerrero.

in the early part of the film—the comique who is the partner of the burlesque-queen and who woos her—is entirely forgotten. I should like to ask Miss Beth Brown, who wrote the story, what's happened to him. He was too devoted to Kitty Darling to disappear. Or was it the fault of the master of the continuity? Well, such little things still happen in Hollywood, and Astoria is just Hollywood's other name. But what happened to the clown? This is the first time I have got excited by a "strange disappearance."

"A" for "*Applause*" and America. "A" for "*Arsenal*" and Art.

I do not think the Russian kino has as yet found a method that suits its profound material. Once I said: *Potemkin* is a film of powerful surface masses. Eisenstein said shortly after in *The Nation* that it was a poster-film. We agreed, I was vindicated. I said the Russians had better find a new method. Pudovkin said before the Filmliga of Amsterdam he had to find a new technique and Eisenstein in *Close-Up* wrote: "Whereas in the first case we are striving for a quick emotional discharge, the new cinema must include deep reflective processes . . ." (the italics are not mine!) This is exactly my statement. The suggestions for this new cinema are to be found in Dreyer's *The Passion of Joan of Arc* and—in the Ukrainian film, *Arsenal* made by Dovzhenko. Here we have a Russian film that is not didactic but suggestive, that is not a perfection and elaboration of the American film of muscular impact (which is exactly the characterization of the Pudovkin kino), but an intensive, agonized, poignant, in-

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prospective film, conceived not as realism punctuated by symbols but as sustained symbolism.

Faults this film has, but that is not to be wondered at. I cannot think of a severer task than creating a structure of symbolism with real solid personalities. But Dovzhenko has succeeded, if not in creating an immaculate symbolic structure, in defining an intention which, by studying the workings of the film, the new Russian director will develop into a form. Russia promises to build a kino where at last thought and poetry and philosophic meaning are active. *Arsenal* renders a film like Vertov's *The Man with the Camera* not obsolete but certainly only a primary lesson for the aspirant.

In *Arsenal* propaganda is freed of its bluntness and becomes a penetrating emotional idea. There is none of the arrogance too often felt in the films of Pudovkin and Vertov. Certainly nothing could be stronger than the ghoulish, garish sights of the entombed soldier and the laughter of the gassed soldier. They are unrelenting as they should be. This is suggestive of the sort of war film F. W. Murnau would make, showing the actual results of the war: cadavers . . . Andreas Latzko's *Men in War*. There can be no pacifistic film which has a central hero, a protagonist—no matter how anti-militaristic its sentiments are. So long as there is participation, as there was in *The Big Parade*, with the soldiers, such a film accentuates military fervor. So long as the ominous rather than the horrible predominates, as in the British film *The Battle of the Coronel and Falkland Islands*, the military passion is enhanced.

Arsenal is not the greatest of films, but it is one of the most important.

There is another Russian film which must not be neglected: *In Old Siberia* (Katorga). It is not the best, but it is one of the most sensitive, and also lacking in arrogance—which is a proof of Russia's adulthood. Another cinematic proof of Russia growing up enough to get a perspective upon itself is Alexander Room's *Bed and Sofa* (Three in a Basement), not yet shown here. Room's social comedy is Russia laughing at herself, getting a tickle out of her new morality.

Russian films are very often too much caricature and not enough of full human experience. Pudovkin defends this by an analogy with Dickens. Ah! but why not Dostoevsky? Dickens served Dostoevsky—see *The Insulted and the Injured* where even the names and the relationships are paralleled to *The Old Curiosity Shop*—as a "source." Dostoevsky's fantasy was something more than caricature or whimsicality—it was the conversion of the ordinary into the extraordinary. And that is exactly the fantasy—in terms of kino—toward which *Arsenal* tends.

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BOOKS

A Farewell to Arms, by Ernest Hemingway. Scribner's. \$2.50.

Hemingway's *A Farewell to Arms* is the best written book that has seen the light in America for many a long day. By well-written I don't mean the tasty college composition course sort of thing that our critics seem to consider good writing. I mean writing that is terse and economical, in which each sentence and each phrase bears its maximum load of meaning, sense impressions, emotion. The book is a first-rate piece of craftsmanship by a man who knows his job. It gives you the sort of pleasure line by line that you get from handling a piece of well-finished carpenter's work. Read the first chapter, the talk at the officers' mess in Gorizia, the scene in the dressingstation when the narrator is wounded, the paragraph describing the ride to Milan in the hospital train, the talk with the British major about how everybody's cooked in the war, the whole description of the disaster at Caporetto to the end of the chapter where the battlepolice are shooting the officers as they cross the bridge, the caesarian operation in which the girl dies. The stuff will match up as narrative prose with anything that's been written since there was any English language.

It's a darn good document too. It describes with reserve and exactness the complex of events back of the Italian front in the winter of 1916 and the summer and fall of 1917 when people had more or less settled down to the thought of war as the natural form of human existence when every individual in the armies was struggling for survival with bitter hopelessness. In the absolute degradation of the average soldier's life in the Italian army there were two hopes, that the revolution would end the war or that Meester Weelson would end the war on the terms of the Seventeen Points. In Italy the revolution lost its nerve at the moment of its victory and Meester Weelson's points paved the way for D'Annunzio's bloody farce at Fiume and the tyranny of Mussolini and the banks. If a man wanted to learn the history of that period in that sector of the European War I don't know where he'd find a better account than in the first half of *A Farewell to Arms*.

This is a big time for the book business in America. The writing, publishing and marketing of books is getting to be a major industry along with beautysoppes and advertising. Ten years ago it was generally thought that all writers were either drunks or fairies. Now they have a halo of possible money around them and are respected on a par with brokers or realtors. The American people seems to be genuinely hungry for books. Even good books sell.

It's not surprising that *A Farewell to Arms*, that accidentally combines the selling points of having a love story and being about the war, should be going like hotcakes. It would be difficult to dope out just why there should be such a tremendous vogue for books about the war just now. Maybe it's that the boys and girls who were too young to know anything about the last war are just reaching a bookbuying age. Maybe it's the result of the intense military propaganda going on in schools and colleges. Anyhow if they read things like *A Farewell to Arms* and *All Quiet on the Western Front*, they are certainly getting the dope straight and it's hard to see how the militarist could profit much. Certainly a writer can't help but feel good about the success of such an honest and competent piece of work as *A Farewell to Arms*.

After all craftsmanship is a damn fine thing, one of the few human functions a man can unstintedly admire. The drift of the Fordized world seems all against it. Rationalization and subdivision of labor in industry tend more and more to wipe it out. It's getting to be almost unthinkable that you should take pleasure in your work, that a man should enjoy doing a piece of work for the sake of doing it as well as he damn well can. What we still have is the mechanic's or motorman's pleasure in a smoothrunning machine. As the operator gets more mechanized even that disappears; what you get is a division of life into drudgery and leisure instead of into work and play. As industrial society evolves and

REVIEWED BY:

John Dos Passos

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Charles Yale Harrison

the workers get control of the machines a new type of craftsmanship may work out. For the present you only get opportunity for craftsmanship, which ought to be the privilege of any workman, in novelwriting and the painting of easelpictures and in a few of the machinebuilding trades that are hangovers from the period of individual manufacture that is just closing. Most of the attempts to salvage craftsmanship in industry have been faddy movements like East Aurora and Morris furniture and have come to nothing. *A Farewell to Arms* is no worse a novel because it was written with a typewriter. But it's a magnificent novel because the writer felt every minute the satisfaction of working ably with his material and his tools and continually pushing the work to the limit of effort.

JOHN DOS PASSOS.

Prose Artistry

Don't Call Me Clever, by Lawrence Drake. Simon & Schuster. \$2.50.

I read *Don't Call me Clever* this summer in galley proof without the sanction of a blurb and without even knowing the author's name. I thought then it was a fine book and I think so now. I am not going to shame Mr. Drake's admirable and restrained prose by gushing over it. His entire method is one in which I am in complete sympathy. I suppose that somewhere in this land someone is either saying that this book is sordid or that it rises on wings of pain and ecstasy. Complaints may arise that there is no plot. Or that no one would care to know these people. I see nothing improbable in any of these predictions and none of them have anything to do with Mr. Drake's book. He writes for people who are able to give him cooperation as readers. He doesn't write for the get rich quick, smart commercial crowd who want a swaggering book that makes them feel bad and dramatic, but for people who are wise in their experiencing of living. His story concerns Jewish people and he tells just as much and just as little as he needs to get over his meaning and his feeling for these people and this life. His eye is accurate and he lives within his time. The validity of an artist depends on his sense of smell. Mr. Drake seems to me to have an accurate sense and he is keen to smell out his time. What such writers may smell out may prove highly objectionable to many people but only time can prove if it is true. Mr. Drake's method in presenting what he sees is a difficult one and he is successful in it. He undertakes to sustain practically his entire book in dialogue. Through this method he gets not only complete characters but a story telling movement and he does so without ever falling into a trickery of the stage, also concerned with dialogue. Anyone who thinks this is easy to do might try writing a page of it.

I prefer Al to almost anybody I have read about in some time. This Al is a terrible fellow, vulgar, noisy, shrewd, sentimental and lovable. He has a wife that many reviewers will slough off as sordid, and he has relatives who may even be termed futile. Al himself is not futile, if that means anything to you. It means nothing to me. I pick up words like that from reading reviews and it seems to be a favorite word among the trade. They use it very much as Mr. Mitchell Palmer used "bolshivism" after the war. I wish one of these birds would analyze the word and see if it is a bogey or not. Personally I am not dismayed by anything that people may be. I am eaten up with curiosity, that is all.

Al's brother Nathan will please most people more than Al.

He is more intelligent but not more complex than Al. He is a contrast to Al with a convincing flesh and blood difference, dividing the family as so often families are divided. In writing this story Mr. Drake could not have begun with a thesis. He began with people and he works out their lives, not some notion of his own. The philosophical implications of Al and Nathan need not concern me.

A shady business deal holds the story together. That says practically nothing at all, any more than the statement "he is in the hardware business" could describe a gent in that trade. It is really Nathan's story. Everything he says shows up the people around him. I wish the things they said occasionally showed him up. I believe Mr. Drake makes life itself trip Nathan, whereas life does not trip Al who only fumbles and falls by virtue of Nathan's observations.

Many of the scenes of this story have the noise and vitality of a Breughel painting. Nathan's fight with the relatives of his betrayed sweetheart is a grand scene. I don't mean grand with a dying swan song implication either. These big words are all spoiled for us. Mr. Drake knows this and he never indulges himself with them nor does he plaster on emotion that is not there. He pares away rather than laying on and personally I would rather look at a fine clean skeleton than a balloon filled with old rags. That should not imply that *Don't Call Me Clever* is a stringy piece of work. What it has is the austerity of an artistic perception. Mr. Drake does not intend to gum up his craft.

In a season of more and muddier books, this one stands out, for me, as a very clear and encouraging piece of work. I believe many masterpieces are appearing this fall, heralded with more adjectives than I would know what to do with in a thousand years. I am not going to herald anything. I hope to hold my tongue and live long enough to see what I shall see.

JOSEPHINE HERBST.

Red Asia

Red Star in Samarkand, by Anna Louise Strong. Coward, McCann. \$3.50.

Anna Louise Strong can always be counted on to come out of Russia with a whole bagful of facts and figures and lively tales. Most tireless of information gatherers and dispensers, she has spent the better part of the past eight years in the Soviet Union. She has travelled everywhere, seen everything, talked to almost everyone worth talking to. And she has done a great piece of work in getting facts about Russia before the American people.

This time Miss Strong has gone down into Central Asia, visiting Tashkent, Samarkand and Bokhara. She describes the wise Soviet policy of exalting the natives, giving them political and cultural independence they have never known before, and at the same time waging a pitiless war against ancient customs, particularly the degradation of women under Mohammedan law. She tells of the great efforts the Soviet Government is making to develop local industry, instead of draining the rich Asian lands of all their raw materials to feed European Russia, leaving the local population stagnant and impoverished, as the Tsar did. She tells of great engineering projects to irrigate the fields where cotton, the "white gold" of Central Asia grows, the spectacular reestablishment and expansion of the cotton industry, its vast experimental and seed stations, the modern communities springing up around them. She tells too of the fight for Soviet power still going on, based on the new landed class of former farm laborers in the villages, and of industrial proletariat in the towns. And into this solid fabric she weaves picturesque legends of the Emir's fall and flight and how Ibrahim the horse thief led the Holy War that followed, quaint tales of how a sheep became the President of a village Soviet, ugly tales of murders that have accompanied the right to free women from polygamy, child marriage and complete slavery.

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the women of Bokhara. And the girls of the Ferghana silk mills have written a love song to their factory:

"When I go home,
The roar of the factory is in me;
It gives me rhythm,
It gives me energy;
What am I doing here at home?"

"At the blowing of the second whistle,
If I am sitting by the waters
Or before the mountains,
None the less I will leap up!
I shall be found at my post of duty
At the blowing of the second whistle."

JESSICA SMITH.

Rebel Poets

Unrest, Rebel Poets' Anthology for 1929, edited by Jack Conroy and Ralph Cheyney. Arthur Stockwell, Ltd., London: 3s6d. U. S. Distributor, Hugh Hanley, 224 W. Pacemont Rd., Columbus, Ohio. \$1.00.

Poetry—O she is a most elegant young lady!—primps and fawns and smiles before a mirror, powdering a delicate nose, now even as she did ages ago, swathed in silks, and sprinkled with perfume. Professors of esthetics, editors of poetry magazines, and sad young men, have decreed that poetry, of all the arts, must remain pure. Well, it is pure. Today even as she did ages ago, she caters to the effeminate and "spiritual" in life, and shudders delicately when confronted by a robust actuality. That too, is valid. Songs of sadness, frustration, sunsets, and love, are valid, and necessary, and I love her for her spiritual drunkenness, for her "arty" ecstasy. The only difficulty is that in the face of the modern tempo it all begins to seem absurd, hackneyed, metaphysical, and futile. The other side of the young lady—her streetwalking moments of cursing and belching of anger, are politely ignored, as the temporary aberrations of a vestal virgin. Poetry, more than any art, is a handmaiden of the bourgeoisie, still struggling with a medieval concept of life. Social insight and rebellion has "bored from within" the novel, despite protestations. But poetry remains singularly pure, not so much because of itself, as because of a sinister selective process. The poetry of revolt is culled and blue-pencilled heavily. An examination of almost any anthology reveals a frigid virginity and most spotless silks. This is not all by accident. Much of it is deliberate, and much of it, of course, is due to the pedantic conception of poetry as a "pure" art. I need only point to Carl Sandburg. I believe that most of his significant poetry can be found in *Chicago Poems*—but note how carefully all anthologies pass over his rebellious work to include beautiful but dumb and wordy landscapes. There is a poetry of revolt being written, but it will not be found in the standard anthologies.

There have been anthologies of revolutionary verse. There is Marcus Graham's voluminous volume; there is *May Days*; the *I. W. W. Song Book*, and a very little but splendid booklet edited by Manuel Gomez. There has never been, so far as I know, an annual anthology of radical poetry. No "reputable" publisher would even consider such a volume. It of necessity depends upon individuals, and for proletarians, the financial difficulties entailed in such a venture are enormous. *Unrest, the Rebel Poets' Anthology for 1929*, marks the first attempt in this direction, and the attempt is successful enough to merit the support of all persons desiring to foster a proletarian literature of revolt. There are 160 poems in this book, and most of them are saturated with revolt, or at least, unrest. Some of the poems are very bad (aptly illustrating, by the way, the very poems the fine introduction by the editors condemns) but a major portion of them are good or interesting, and nearly all of them to our purpose. The best poems in the book, I think, are by Spector, Macleod, James Rorty, Clements, Michael Gold, Jarrboe, Moyer, Leonard, Porter, Conroy, Cheyney, Root, Keene Wallis, Waters, Weiss, Cooksley, Musser, Snow, Robert Whitaker, Moskowitz, Giovannitti, and Coates. There are other poems that are good, but have little or no connection with the proletarian movement. This first book is enough to make one look forward to the 1930 number with real anticipation.

JOSEPH KALAR.

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Children in War

Class of 1902. By Ernest Glaeser. Translated by Willa and Muir.
The Viking Press. \$2.50.

Germany during the first years of the World War—a land, according to the allied propagandists, seething with futile hate, a land peopled with crucifiers, pyromaniacs, infanticides, rapers and looters. Towards the summer of 1918 we were given a different picture: the Germans were sullen, cruel, desperate, inhuman. In *Class of 1902*, Mr. Glaeser gives us an entirely different picture of civilian Germany during the nightmare years of 1914-1918.

The title of this book is the term used by the German War Office to designate the children who were born in that year and who would have been subject to service at the front in 1918. They are the youths who narrowly escaped the indescribable slaughter of the western front at Kemmel Hill, Cambrai, Amiens, Arras during those last, insane months.

La guerre—ce sont nos parents, is a quotation which Mr. Glaeser uses on the title-page of the book and what a parent war was to the starved, broken, hapless children who are the characters in the book.

A small city in Germany—1914—the petty jealousies of small town life—Herr Dr. Hoffman, lawyer and social democrat; pompous, fat, wheezing, verbose—"Never will a Social Democrat take up arms—except against the Czar." The child-characters, Ferd, the son of the Red Major; Leo Silberstein, the victim of the cold anti-semitism of the little town; August Kremmelbein, the son of the strike leader—all twelve and thirteen year old youngsters when the War burst upon the peaceful town. And then shouting and cheering, troop trains pass the little station with flowers in the muzzles of their rifles singing sad, sentimental soldier-songs, "*Must I, must I then leave my little home . . .*" A unified nation. The New Germany. The Kaiser's bombastic speeches. Phrases. Editorials. Endless lines of rumbling troop-trains breaking the silence of the small-town night. No more anti-semitism. No more gendarmes for strikers. A unified Germany. "We are all Germans now." The war was making everything right again. Everyone loved one another. Women kissed the cheering soldiers on their way to the front. Everyone is united, the Red Major said, *because they need their hatred for the other people, the enemy.*

These children who should have been playing football, or learning lessons are caught in the hysteria of war. They buy maps and follow the fortunes of the German Army. At first there are victories, Liege, Namur, Brussels. The boys put little red flags to mark the amazing advance of victorious armies in Belgium and France. The old, pre-war standards of conduct break down. There is a looseness about all moral conduct now. Nothing matters but the war. In this atmosphere these boys live through the most impressionable period of their lives. War-sex, a terrible, demoralizing thing, grips their lives. There are sordid sex-affairs between the children and married women whose men are at the front.

Then the excitement of the war dies down. They go back to school—but school is not the same any longer. They have learned strange things now. The lessons sound meaningless. Year drags after year. Hunger. Faces become pinched. The war editorials shriek victory. Scurvy. Babies die for the lack of milk. The blockade is successful. "The Admiralty die for the lack of milk. The blockade around all German ports is thoroughly effective." A farmers wife offers one of the boys a dripping, brown roast goose if he will spend the night with her—her husband is away at the war.

Class of 1902, I do not hesitate to say, is one of the greatest books that have come out of Germany since the war, not only as a piece of excellent writing but as a factual picture of Germany behind the lines.

Ernst Glaeser is a young German writer, at present one of the editors of the *Frankfurter Zeitung*. In a sense his book is autobiographical because he, too, was born in 1902.

This is a great book. By all means read it.

CHARLES YALE HARRISON.



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WORKERS' ART

FINNISH THEATRE GROUPS

Dear Comrades:

Here in Superior, Wis., although this is not a large place as far as the Finnish people are concerned, we have a dramatic group, and director to whom a regular salary is paid. The director is also the janitor of the hall this time; but we have had a paid director only for plays.

There are from forty to sixty members in the dramatic club and whenever there is a need, the director may always call new members from the parent society.

Plays are shown, the whole-night, three-to-five-act plays a month, preferably on Sunday night. Comedy draws the larger audiences, and musical comedies are very popular.

Plays are picked from the literature of the world, that is, in translations. German and French plays are usually the most interesting. Also original Finnish plays are presented. Plays are selected with a view to their value to the working class: Hauptmann's *The Weavers* used to be a favorite at one time. The Finnish playwrights in this country have written some excellent plays from such subjects as the class war in Finland, industrial wars in this country, etc.

Most of our plays are rented from the Finnish Federation in New York.

Then we have two choral societies, one for male voices and one for mixed voices. During the summer these clubs were not active, but there are signs that they will take up the work again. A concert or two is given every year and program is furnished to vaudeville entertainments, that is, of our own.

We had a lecturer or two last winter, lecturing on Leninism, co-operation, etc. and most likely will do something of the kind during the coming winter also.

In the cultural work the class lines are always followed or observed.

I visited the local Workers' Hall Theatre a week or two ago when they presented a four-act drama, *A Blow*, by H. Bataille, a Frenchman. I was surprised at the good acting. Much time and work had been given to rehearsing the play.

We also have the Little Theatre here. We have realized that to combat it we must organize the Workers' Theater and present plays not only in Finnish, but also in English. In fact the local Communist league has presented plays in English, and it may form a nucleus from which to build up a regular institution. They are now concerned in actual fight for free speech here to give much attention to such cultural work, but they realize the value of drama and during the coming winter they will sponsor many such big occasions.

In the youth I see the element in which the old nationalist-Finnish, Swedish, German, etc. cultural or art work can find its logical successors. With the present generation the national languages are passing away, and unless the young workers step in place, the national "cultures" are passing away too, like the Indian "cultures" have passed.

Now about the League Comrade Gold proposed to establish. Why not enlarge the scope of the Finnish Dramatic League and make it a Workers' National Dramatic League? They have the experience already and they already have some suitable plays also in English. I suggest that you get in touch with them.

During the last two or three years, several dramatic courses have been held all over the country, but especially in upper Minnesota, upper Wisconsin and upper Michigan where the Finnish workers are more centered in mining, lumbering and farming industries, and where they have numerous large halls with fairly good stage equipment. According to Comrade Niilo Terho of Superior, Wisconsin, who conducted ten or more courses, the average enrollment was sixty students, all very enthusiastic and wanting to prolong the courses over the fixed period of two to four weeks.

The curriculum included lectures on the history of the dramatic art from the earliest known periods; lectures on aesthetics; relation of art to class struggle; short review of grammar; recitation,

in theory and practice; make-up and costumes; expression by colors; theory and practice in scenery; practical training in acting, etc.

Those clubs that have had the courses are the most active not only in dramatic work but in all kinds of workers' cultural work, and there is a demand for additional courses even from places where such have already been held.

This only shows that workers would rather create their own art than forever contend with the sickly movie, where they see only the imaginary world of the plutocrats and not the realities of life.

Let us get up and build the Workers' Theatre everywhere! Superior, Wis.

MARTIN MATTILA.



Photo by Oscar Fischer, Spartacus Film League.

FILMS AND PHOTOGRAPHS

Editor, *New Masses*:

Among the various workers' art groups which the *New Masses* is trying to combine and direct, the film group is one of the most important. The propaganda value of the film is tremendous and under the direction of class-conscious workers much can be done for the revolutionary cause.

For this reason we were glad to hear of the formation of the Spartacus Film League and of the film activities of the W.I.R. under the direction of Em Jo Basshe.

But once these film groups are formed, ways must be found of turning them to the greatest possible use for the proletariat. Choosing material as the needs of the revolutionary labor movement demand, presenting it simply and directly, and giving the widest possible distribution to the film after it is once completed, are of primal importance.

But even in the process of making films such a group can be of great benefit. Do not overlook the value of good stills of labor and workingclass life for the labor press and pictorials. This is of daily importance in education, and agitation.

My idea is to have a page story in photos contributed every month to the *Labor Defender* by workers' film and photo groups. For instance: have one group take the assignment of presenting pictorially the dangers of such an industry as bridge-building, another group the daily life of a steel worker, another the story of a strike, another of a Negro coal miner, still another the story of a class-war prisoner. Numerous topics can be chosen from the daily struggles of labor and daily events of great significance to labor. The recent stock market crash could be handled as a contrast with winter unemployment lines; the sentence against Fall as a contrast to the 117 years given the seven Gastonia strike leaders; the luxurious palaces of the rich can be contrasted with the hovels of the poor, etc.

Class clashes in capitalist society offer all the contrasts in the world for a class-conscious photographer who wishes to use his art as a working class weapon.

What I have suggested is only one of the ways in which one of the groups of workers' artists can help in the fight of labor.

Those interested in being such contributors please communicate with Sol Auerbach, Associate Editor, *Labor Defender*, 80 E. 11th St., New York City.

NEW MASSES



Photo by Oscar Fischer, Spartacus Film League.

Workers' Art in Germany

New Masses:

Dear comrades: Almost every industrial town in Germany has its Workers' Dramatic Circle—a group of workmen and their wives, who produce a few plays each year. These plays are invariably proletarian, in most instances written by the workers themselves individually, or in groups. I know of a play having been written by a group in a single evening, and produced with great success on the local stage three weeks later.

One of the fine ideas developed here is that of the *Bunte Revue*—*Colored Revue*—consisting of a dozen or more short satirical skits on current situations. This is the closest approach I've seen to a workers' Vaudeville which is probably destined for more immediate success than the drama so-called, which is usually heavy food for a worker-audience.

Each community has its ridiculous officials, politicians, teachers, etc. whom it ridicules in a happy succession of lively scenes, and in a manner not too direct, in order to duck the Gummiknippels of German Freiheit. Yet often a hard slap is given as for instance in a satire on the Minister of Railways in a year of record train-wrecks, which was enacted here with great success.

Songs and music are composed by the proletarians themselves after a day's work, and special assignments usually fall to the lot of unemployed comrades who have much time for such work. The scenery is also designed and painted by home-talent. One of the comrades undertakes to direct the group—even down to the ballet-dances on labor themes—such as a "Rationalization Dance," a "Miners' Dance," etc. Discussions with the group usually result in valuable suggestions, and the cooperation of the various members during rehearsal periods is the most admirable I have ever witnessed.

Mike Gold's plea for a workers' art comes at the right moment when the triumph of bourgeois productions is at its peak, and the workers are left without any genuine expression of their hopes and aspirations. The idea of a Revue—a monthly or seasonal comment on the follies of the American scene—would undoubtedly be as successful in the U. S., as here in Germany where great audiences prove a large interest in the thing. This gives plenty of opportunity for sharp wit, and humor—for proletarian clowns, and parodies on stage-hits, etc. And each locality can develop its own Vaudeville after its individual taste and material. It seems in this respect the American comrades can well learn something from the German movement.

Willich, Germany.

ED FALKOWSKI.

The artists of the John Reed Club, will give their first exhibition under the auspices of the club at the United Workers Cooperative Apartments, 2700 Bronx Park East on December 15. Among the artists whose work will be shown are: Art Young, Hugo Gellert, Louis Lozowick, Wm. Gropper, Gan Kolski, Jacob Burck, Fred Ellis, Morrie Pass, A. Refregier, L. Rybak, Esther Shemitz, Otto Soglow, Jan Matulka, Eitaro Ishigaki and others.

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LETTERS FROM READERS

Sinclair on College Men

R. A. Foster, Advertising Mgr.,
E. P. Dutton & Co., Inc., New York

Dear Sir:—

I note your statement in the *New Masses*, "Nor has it been our privilege to know or know about, any college men who have been strike breakers in any sense of the word."

If you will be so good as to turn to page 142 of *The Goose-Step*, you will find as follows, referring to the University of California:

"The keen young commercialists of this school of hate are thoroughly imbued with the psychology of the dominant classes; even the boys who come from the working class are on the way to the top, and the quicker they learn to feel like gentlemen, the better fraternity they will 'make'. 'I think organized labor should be killed,' said one undergraduate to a friend of mine. So they are eager for strike-breaking expeditions, and their 'soldier president' has kept alive this university tradition. When the electric workers went on strike, the mayor of Berkeley smashed the strike with university boys."

"And then came the seamen's strike, which proved a more serious matter; it is a lark to run a dynamo or a trolley car for a few days, but to ship on a steamer is something you can't get out of, and some unfortunate boys who were trapped by the knavish university machine into shipping as seamen on the Matson Line and the Dollar Line paid for their blunder with their lives. Others of them came home thoroughly trained radicals—having learned more in a few months below deck on a steamship than they would have learned in a hundred years in the lap of their alma mater. Some newspapers were filled with scare stories about sabotage; but of course the real reason was inexperienced labor. On the steamship Ohio the chief engineer was a Washington athlete, the second engineer was a Boston dental student, and the third engineer an undergraduate student of the University of California!"

After reading the above you will, of course, never again be able to make the statement which you made in the *New Masses*.

Sincerely,
UPTON SINCLAIR.

Pasadena, Calif.

New Masses Abroad

Dear Comrades:

I am glad to inform you that three of Mr. Gold's stories have been translated into Japanese. Mr. Gold's *Damned Agitator* is to appear (I haven't received the copy yet) in the August number of the *Senki* (the Banner) and his *Strike* is to appear in another left magazine. Another of his short stories (I do not know the exact title) has also appeared in the *Bugei Sensen* (Literary Front).

Last month one of our Japanese comrades

delivered a lecture on comrade Gold's works before an audience of 500 in Tokio. He also wrote a newspaper article about comrade Gold.

With the material you sent me, I myself have written a twenty-page article on American proletarian literature for a big Japanese magazine.

One of my Japanese comrades who told me that comrade Gold's mass recitation *Strike* was performed in Japan by the players of the "Left theatre" recently.

Hoping that he will "persist" I remain,
Yours

D. UCHIDA.

Syracuse, N. Y.

Including the Scandinavian

In your November issue you mention that *New Masses* articles have been translated in *Rote Fahne*, *Monde* and republished in *Workers Life*, etc. I can add that some of your articles have been translated into Swedish and Finnish. The Swedish paper *Folkets Dagblad*, Stockholm, has had at least some 8 or 9 of your stories and one or two of your poems translated. Some of your articles have been translated in the language press in this country.

New York, N. Y. AXEL CARLSON.

Prizes for Dehn and Gropper

New Masses:

We are very pleased to inform you that the Harmon Foundation has just granted awards of \$50.00 each to Mr. Adolph Dehn and Mr. William Gropper for their cartoons, "Unemployed" and "Two Million Children Work in America" which appeared respectively in the May, 1929, and November, 1928, issues of the *New Masses*.

These cartoons were considered highly interesting in the manner in which they dramatize ideas that are definite stimuli to better national and community life, which, as you know, is the purpose of this group of awards.

The Harmon Foundation feels that the cartoonist combining a penetrating thought with good art has a constructive influence on social, civic and industrial life, and wishes to give recognition and encouragement to him in such work.

The awards, divided in two groups, opened on April 1, 1928. All cartoonists in North America were eligible to enter published and unpublished drawings in the first groups, for which the awards of \$250 were given. The second group consisted of awards of \$50 and was open to cartoonists on daily papers in cities of 500,000 or less population; and cartoonists on magazines, trade journals, student periodicals, artists and art students.

Very sincerely yours,

EVELYN S. BROWN,
Ass't, Public Information.

Harmon Foundation, New York, N. Y.



Joseph Kalar, age 23 plus; son of ironore miner and Slovenian peasant; taught one-room school in homestead district for a year and a half; papermill worker and lumberhandler; at present, greenlumber scaler. Habitat, Wilds of Minnesota. Black-listed by D. A. R., indicted by Federal Grand Jury for calling U. S. A. bad names. Contributed to a number of little "free spirit" magazines before his resurrection. Contributed frequently to *Daily Worker*. Aspires to translate bewildered soul of the proletariat articulately, and thus, in a roundabout way, express himself. Member Ex. Board of Rebel Poets. Contributing ed. of *New Masses* and *The Morada*.

IN THIS ISSUE

Art Young—contributing editor of the *New Masses* is one of America's best known artists. He is author of the illustrated biography *On My Way* and a book of drawings *Trees At Night*. His two "extensive explorations" of Hell have resulted in books of inimitable drawings. He has made "many quick trips for odd drawings" for the *Masses*, *Judge*, *Life*, etc. He has just completed the "third extensive exploration" and his discovery of the astounding progress in modernizing Hell will be told in words and pictures in a forthcoming book.

Carlo Tresca—is editor of *Il Martello*. His story in this issue is part of a chapter of a forthcoming autobiography *I'll Never Forget*.

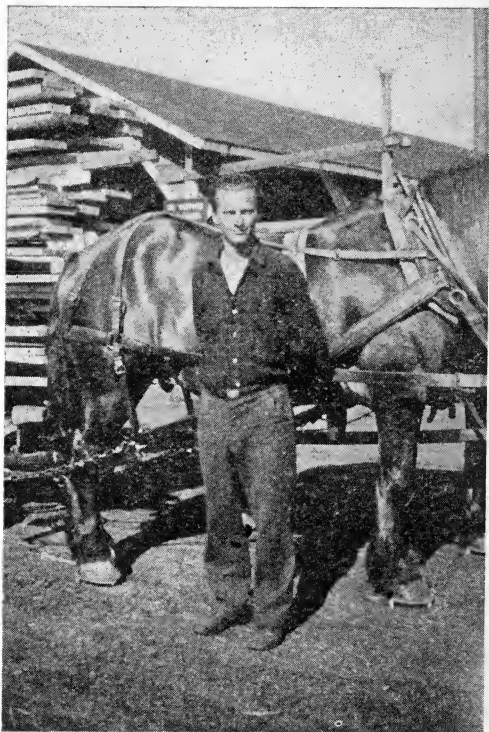
Robert Gates—of Cedar Rapids, Iowa, makes his first appearance in the *New Masses*.

Josephine Herbst—is author of the recently published novel *Money For Love*.

Harry Potomkin—movie critic, is a contributor to *Monde*, *Close-Up*, *Theatre Arts* and other publications.

Jessica Smith—whose reviews have appeared in other issues, is author of *Women In Soviet Russia*.

NEW MASSES



Joseph Kalar, age 23 plus; son of ironore miner and Slovenian peasant; taught one-room school in homestead district for a year and a half; papermill worker and lumberhandler; at present, greenlumber scaler. Habitat, Wilds of Minnesota. Black-listed by D. A. R., indicted by Federal Grand Jury for calling U. S. A. bad names. Contributed to a number of little "free spirit" magazines before his resurrection. Contributed frequently to *Daily Worker*. Aspires to translate bewildered soul of the proletariat articulately, and thus, in a roundabout way, express himself. Member Ex. Board of Rebel Poets. Contributing ed. of *New Masses* and *The Morada*.

ON UPTON SINCLAIR

Dear Comrade Mike:

You confessed, in the last issue of the *New Masses* that your fondness for Upton Sinclair keeps growing year by year. It strikes me that your likes are this once slightly off shade. When honest to god red starts resembling washed-out and gentle pink it is time to draw the line of demarcation—time to classify and label.

To me, the difference in shade is the difference between friend and foe. I've been long suffering enough. Tried to be understanding and tried to remember. I've no more patience. I don't care a damn for one whose shade is different from mine, and every worth-while red feels as I do. What can you do with birds such as we are.

Comradely,

New York, N. Y. S. RESLUTH.

Answer:—One can't do anything, and doesn't want to do anything. The fact remains: Upton Sinclair is the only major writer in this country who has devoted himself for more than 25 years to presenting the workers' side of the class struggle. He is published and read on an enormous scale in Soviet Russia. He is read by millions of workers in every part of Europe and Asia. He has given them a worker's picture of America. He has many faults; but he is a great man. It is a mistake to judge him solely as a member of the Socialist Party. A writer must in the last analysis be judged by his work; not by his private morals or party affiliations. What if Upton Sinclair were an anarchist, an I.W.W. or an S.L.P. man? Party affiliations are of life and death importance on the political field, but it is almost impossible to approach literature and art in the party spirit. This was thrashed out in Soviet Russia by the C.P. itself, which in a famous decision, refused the request of certain writers that the official Party stamp be put on any one group of writers.

The function of a revolutionary writer in this country is not to suggest political platforms and theses, but to portray the life of the workers and to inspire them with solidarity and revolt. Upton Sinclair has done this magnificently. No one else has. The only way to criticize Sinclair as a writer, not as a politician, is for the Communist movement to develop a few novelists and playwrights with his skill, social passion, appetite for hard work and general incorruptibility.

MICHAEL GOLD.

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